WALTER GREENWAY

SPY AND HERO

HIS LIFE STORY

ROBERT HOLMES

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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SPY AND HERO

His Life Story

BY

ROBERT HOLMES

AUTHOR OF
'WALTER GREENWAY, SPY, AND OTHERS SOMETIME CRIMINAL'

FIFTH IMPRESSION

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1918

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TO the splendid little Arab Woman who made the home of her English hero-husband a paradise of happiness, his brief history is dedicated, in confident assurance that all who read will admire her who figures so beautifully in the romantic writings Walter Greenway pencilled concerning his eight years' residence in the East.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

THE extraordinary man whose patriotic service to Britain is described in perhaps the most remarkable letters the war has yet produced seemed a criminal when first introduced to me in the discharge of my official duties. I regarded him as such for nearly nine years. Then the receipt of those letters from the East caused me to make fuller inquiry. A great deal of invaluable information was voluntarily furnished by persons familiar with his earlier life. The outcome is to establish the fact that he was judged wrongly when reckoned a member of the criminal class. He blundered into what looked like crime at first, then, misunderstanding his friends, he persisted in a way of going on which naturally earned imprisonment repeatedly.

Having published his earlier letters under the misapprehension that he was what he seemed to be, I think it best to unfold his true character in

the same stages revealed to me. I do this largely out of justice to all who misjudged the man. It will be seen how difficult he made it, by his own conduct, for those most concerned in his wellbeing either to hold him guiltless or to help him back to a right course. Against this is to be set the certain fact that in his heart he felt it was only in Arabia his nature was understood. He had a grievance growing continually while he stayed here. There he met a wife who, with her parents and the children which blessed their union, so changed his life as to cause his grievance to vanish away, and in its place to grow up repentance for the pain his early follies gave.

It is a great story he tells. I have made no attempt at embellishment, knowing it would only be marred by such treatment. I have added to what he tells himself such information of his early life as I have been favoured with by the friends of his youth, and of his later days what I have gleaned from those brought into accidental contact with him but a little while before the end, and with this I have interwoven things I have learned officially from various sources.

The story is true. Real names are not always given, since that would not always be consistent with maintaining concealment of the real name of Walter Greenway, and I am pledged not to give that. There is a well-known rule forbidding those

who help a man to his feet revealing his past mistakes under his true name, and I concur most heartily in the opinion that the rule is only kind and wise. I might be disposed to make an exception in Walter Greenway's case. Even if he had ever been a criminal, all would be atoned for in the service he rendered at last. I do not think any individual who counts will be found in the whole wide world to disagree here. However, the question is settled for me finally by the desire of his aunt and uncle that he shall remain Walter Greenway. After all, he has made the name he adopted one of which no mortal need be ashamed. Whether she is called by it or not, I would the woman he so deservedly and so fervently loved might know how much it is admired in Britain!

ROBERT HOLMES.

13 Priory Road,
Sheffield, *August* 1917.

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WALTER GREENWAY, SPY AND HERO.

I.

WALTER GREENWAY, ENIGMA.

THEY had told me that I should make nothing of him. I saw him merely as a matter of routine in the cell he occupied at the police station before being brought into Court on a charge of burglariously entering certain premises with intent to commit a felony. It seemed good to me to endeavour to gather some particulars concerning the antecedents and mode of life of a stranger in our midst, so that I might be in a position to judge what it was possible to do to help him, should the charge be dismissed, or should he elect to come to me for a new start when released from prison, if convicted and sentenced.

They had understated the truth. I made less than nothing of him. I went into the cell to interview a man whom I was told was deaf and dumb.

He was a small, lithe, pleasant-faced, swarthy-complexioned, active-looking fellow, with great, dreamy, dark eyes, about thirty years of age, suspiciously intelligent in appearance, to my mind, for a mute. He was decently clad, and I could not make out how he had found it possible to maintain himself in fair prosperity, being, as he gave the police to understand, unable to read or write, and failing to comprehend both their amateurish efforts at talking with the fingers and my own. I left him with an uncomfortable feeling that I was possibly doing an afflicted mortal an injustice, yet unable to agree that he was deaf and dumb at all.

When he got into Court, a nameless offender, he was seen by the capable instructor of our local mutes, who worked hard but vainly before the opening of the case in a strenuous effort to make something of him. The case was called on with success far away.

"You're going to interpret for us," the Magistrate remarked in pleasant courtesy as a greeting to the instructor, who looked perplexed, but silently consented to make a further attempt.

The Clerk of the Court read the charge over. The interpreter's fingers worked with marvellous rapidity, and now and then he clenched his right hand and brought it into sharp and loud contact with his open left palm. The offender gazed at him with mild interest at first, but obviously failed

to comprehend what it was all about. The interpreter slowed down, and went through the performance at quarter speed. The accused's interest faded; he followed the proceedings with evident languor, yawning before the end was reached.

"He doesn't appear to know anything of the deaf and dumb language, your worship," the interpreter concluded; "I tried, before Court, to make him comprehend me, but I couldn't. I scarcely think the man is deaf and dumb. He would know some of the signs if he were. He is intelligent, and he must have some way of making himself understood."

The Magistrate thought so too. It was plain that the case could not proceed until all doubt was solved regarding the accused's ability to follow it. He was remanded for three days.

The police forgot to give him his dinner that day, and at tea-time, and supper-time also, he was overlooked. He made a lot of noise, kicking and rattling to call attention to official forgetfulness. But they were dull persons, and failed to take in what he would have them understand. They went to his cell time and again. He opened his mouth wide, frantically pushing his fingers therein, and swallowing energetically. They lugged a four-gallon bucket filled with water into his cell, provided a tin mug, and indicated that he was welcome to drink his fill. He shook his head till

it looked likely to fall off. They stared at him as if entirely mystified, and went their way once more.

He resumed his signals of distress. The relief came on duty, and heard him, but were advised by their departing colleagues to "let him be"; so he continued kicking and knocking till midnight. Then his efforts grew so violent that an officer went up to him. He repeated the opening of his mouth, the putting of fingers therein, and the imaginary gulping. The officer repeated the bucket trick. He waved his arms in violent dissent. The constable had an inspiration, the arms waving in the direction of the heap of rugs put on the plank bed for the man's covering in the night.

"Oh, I see; that's what's bothering you is it?" he remarked; "well, they're not lousy, then; but they can be shifted if they're in your road." He gathered the rugs in his arms, and departed from the cell, slamming the door after him.

It was a stupid sort of thing to do, for there was nothing at all in the poor man's gesticulations suggestive of a complaint that the blankets were alive. No wonder the dumb spake at such treatment. To be denied food was hard enough; to be left, in addition, without bed-covering, was intolerable.

"I say, you damned fool," shouted an alarmed, stentorian voice after the officer, "you're not taking

those blankets away, are you? I shall be starved to death. Bring 'em back, and let's have something to eat. I've not had a bite since breakfast, at eight this morning."

The constable heard the voice distinctly through the thickness of the door, and above the sound of his own heavy footsteps. He was startled, but he turned back and entered the cell again.

"Oh," he said, "you've found your tongue, have you? I thought we should be curing your complaint in time. Now let's have your name, and a few particulars about you. Then you can have your bedclothes back if your answers are all right, and happen a bit of some'at to eat besides."

He collapsed into docile obedience at that. His name, he said, was Walter Greenway, his age twenty-nine years, his home, in a neighbouring town, his occupation, that of a clerk; he was single, and he lived at the house of his father, a retired chemist of some small means. These particulars the police saw no reason to doubt; accordingly the bedding was restored, supper provided, and matters at the station settled down to normal.

"What made you pretend to be deaf and dumb when before the Court last Monday?" the Magistrate inquired on taking up the case again after remand; "you put people to a lot of trouble. What caused you to act so foolishly?"

"I didn't want my people dragging in," he muttered; "that was why, sir." It was set down as a melancholy lie; the police knew by this time what sort of a record he had; his father had tired of helping him long before. He had never scrupled to bring his people in so long as there was the least prospect of their helping him. Whatever was responsible for his whim to pose as a deaf mute, in the opinion of the police it was not what he stated. The case went on; in due course it reached the Court of Assize.

Full particulars of his career were revealed there. He had received an excellent education, and was a well-trained and most capable clerk, with an uncommonly good knowledge of foreign languages—it being said, for example, that he spoke and wrote German like a native. It was plain that he had taken to a life of crime of deliberate choice; there was no earthly reason why he should not have done well in his proper calling; he got into mischief out of pure love of it.

"He can climb like a cat," a detective informed me, not without admiration; "and the way he runs along house-tops from one end of a long row to the other, as easy as you and me walk on the streets, it's a sight to see. I tell you, sir, it's right down exciting work trying to catch him. He'll slip down a roof by a fall-pipe two hundred yards farther on than where you could swear he's

time to be. And, as you're not expecting him anywhere there, there'd be no catching him if he wasn't such a fool as to come peeping round where you are, just for the fun of seeing you baffled. That's what's done him every time."

Every time meant nine times; such was the number of convictions recorded against him, all for similar offences. He was a total abstainer and a non-smoker; he was not a gambler; his one vice was burglary, and he did not appear to have made any serious attempt to settle down to his proper employment as a corresponding clerk since he first exchanged the desk for the house-top—he entered premises always by an attic window—at twenty-five years old. By the accident of habitually appearing before a lenient judge, he had escaped sentence of penal servitude hitherto, as he escaped it now, being once more committed to hard labour.

"Send me somewhere right away," he begged of me, on release; "my people want to have no more to do with me; the Chaplain tried them all, saying a good deal better of me than I deserved; I knew he was overdoing the thing, and they'd see through it. It was all because I translated some theological stuff for him from the German, that he made up his mind what a lot my people ought to do for such an ornament of the family. But it didn't impress them. They know me such a lot better than his reverence does. I don't blame them.

They've given me many a fair innings, and I've never scored a run for them yet. It's against common-sense that they should have me back in the family team."

"So you can play cricket," I remarked, "as well as do a good deal else in the way of accomplishments. What is there exactly that you haven't had a try at? They tell me that in prison you've been bookbinder, clerk, printer, painter, even steeple-jack, which would do very well, I should say. Out of prison, you've been foreign correspondent, human cat, burglar, cricketer, deaf mute, and I don't know what else. How came you to play the deaf mute, by the way?"

"Just a whim, sir—to baffle the authorities a bit, and for sport; that was all," he answered with a grin. Then he went on.

"It may sound strange, but it's absolutely true—I can't resist an attic window. Wherever I go my eyes naturally turn upwards. I notice how careless most people are with their upper windows, and I feel just bound to show them they are mistaken in their view that nobody can get in there. It's a case of being ruined by one's gifts, if you like—taking a pride in being able, as the police say, 'to run up a pipe and play about on a roof, like a cat.' I shall never do any good where there are houses with attics, or with any other sort of upper storey.

"I should be out of temptation on a sailing-ship. I could climb the rigging and do no harm to anybody. Or an Indian wigwam village might do, or a Bedouin encampment — no attics there, I understand.

"The chaplain told no more than the truth, though my people could not be expected to believe it, when he described my angelic conduct in prison. I'm quite a cherub there. They mostly give me a bit of climbing — painting spouts, or sometimes even attending to the coping of a tall chimney, and the recreation keeps me straight; besides, the top windows are barred like the rest, and beyond me, anyhow.

"Send me somewhere out of the country — to sea for choice. I shall be at my accomplishments, as you call them, again if I stay in a civilised community."

He was a strange person. Apart from his candidly admitted fondness for burglariously entering dwelling-houses by attic windows, he was like any other sharp, intelligent, healthy man, and could do well if he cared.

While I talked with him a letter was delivered from a shipping-office asking for men. I resolved to give him a start on a sailing-ship, as he desired. There was no reason to suppose that he would put anybody aboard to inconvenience, while he could easily adapt himself to a new sphere.

He sailed, and for twelve months I heard nothing but good of him. Going aboard the schooner *Swan* as spare hand, the skipper doubting whether he was worth his salt, he immediately astonished everybody by displaying a knowledge of seamanship which few of the crew could surpass, and also by the extraordinary talent he possessed for picking up strange languages, at the same time earning quite an enviable reputation for capacity to enter into a joke, and for helping his shipmates to a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Here is an extract from a long letter one of those shipmates sent me—one of a series going five years further back, and continued till the writer lost his life in the same vessel when it was torpedoed in February 1917,—such being his regard for me, inasmuch as it was my fortune to help him to a life at sea:—

> "We found that last bloke as you put in the skipper's way all right, Mr Holmes. We thought at first as we'd got a dud what we could take a rise out of any time we were a bit dull. Instead of that it's him as gets us to take yarns in as you'd say no marine would believe. He's thick. Nobody can learn him anything about a schooner. He knew it all afore he came on board. It seems funny where he picked it up. He says he always got his living on land till you sent him here, and I

expect it's true. He's not a liar in things like that. But if he learnt his sailoring in his holidays, he made good use of them, anyhow; and he must have spent them all on ships. He owns he was never off the water any time he could get a day anywhere he could find a boat; and if he didn't find something out new wherever he went, it wasn't his fault. According to what he's told us, he's cruised round Scotland and Ireland twice, both times in roughish weather. I reckon that's how he learnt how to reef a sail in a storm. Anyhow, nobody here had to teach him aught. He made rings round most of us from the start.

"You should have seen him when we were off Spain, coming out. We were watching for a bit of fun, wondering why he hadn't been sea-sick, but making sure he'd show the white feather before long — heavy waves sweeping the deck in grand style. He didn't alter; all he did was to laugh and make jokes. All at once, just to try him, the mate ordered him aloft, never dreaming he could do it. Didn't he, though? He was up like lightning, and when he'd done what he was told, there he sat like a monkey, thoroughly enjoying himself, while all we could do was to stare at him and wonder where the deuce you'd picked him

up—he'd told us himself you'd sent him to sea to keep him out of mischief.

"Well, he came down when he was ready, winking at us with those merry eyes he's got, and his gipsy face full of devilment, while he thanked the mate for giving him a chance of learning his lessons. 'I love a bit of climbing,' he says. 'I'm glad I was lucky enough to get on here. You won't forget me, sir, when you've another little job of that sort—will you?'

"We call him Black Walt on account of his complexion, and Black Walt's showed us what he's made of, I can tell you, sir. When we got to Teneriffe and went ashore a bit, blowed if he couldn't speak Spanish as well as the Spaniards themselves. They hadn't a bit of trouble to make him out. All we could do was to open our mouths at him. He fairly knocked us out. It was same when we got to the Cape. He listened awhile to the Kaffirs, then began to talk to them in their own lingo, just as if he'd known it all his life. I never saw such a fellow. And, mind you, he doesn't bother either with wine or women. He is a funny article, right. I can't reckon him up. But he's clever, and no mistake. And good-tempered—you can't find a better-tempered fellow anywhere! I think everybody on the ship except captain and mate

have had a ducking or two through his devilment. Of course we've all paid him back all right—but never a quarrel of any sort, or any high words. He laughs everything off, no matter what it is, little or big. He's always up to some trick; he can't help it. We've just left India. One of the chaps bought a piece of silk—as smart a bit of colour as you ever saw,—for his girl, you know. Black Walt got hold of it, unbeknown to him, made it into a turban, and put it on the ship's monkey. The little beggar went aloft as proud as Punch, and sat there, the chap as owned the silk raving like mad and threatening to kill the monkey, which he'd no more sense than to think had stolen his silk and made it into a turban all with its own hands! Walt saved the little beggar from a hiding when it came down, taking the blame and buying another piece of silk, the monkey having made a bit of a mess of that. But he took the price out of that fellow for being so soft. That monkey wore a collar nearly a month—a deep white band with this on—'Turban Maker to the Crew of the *Swan*.' Well, that's only one of Walt's tricks. He's as full of 'em as a kitten, and he can no more help playing jokes than I could help wagging my tail if I was a baa-lamb."

This unsolicited testimonial from a man to whom he was an utter stranger on going aboard ship gave me great hope that I had started Greenway on the right track. It was as plain that the scamp knew how to make friends as it was pleasing to learn he was doing well; and the seaman's letter was quickly followed by one, almost equally inspiriting, from the skipper himself, who wrote:—

> "You'll have given me up by this. I ought to have told you a long while since what I make of your man Greenway. I thought for a goodish bit his style was too perfect to last, so I'd better wait till I'd something definite to report about him. Well, I've had him eleven months, and I'm about as wise as ever. What floors me is why he's here. Of course he's a past. I know that. But a man like him has no need to beg for a job anywhere. The men all like him. He's regular hot stuff, always playing some prank, but as good a sailor as ever stepped on deck, and a demon for work. Now and then I've wondered whether he's quite all there. It would take a week to describe half the tricks he's been up to—healthy and good-tempered enough, and such as make him a great favourite, but outlandish to such an extent you can't help wondering how he thinks of them. But, rum customer as he is, and for all his eternal sky-larking, a good bit of which I could spare, I

think he'll do. It isn't that I've ever had any fault to find with him. As I've said before, all that's bothered me is a feeling that his conduct's too good to last.

"You never told me what a marvel he is at languages. Happen you didn't know yourself. Let me tell you. I don't believe he'd be in the company of any foreigner a week but he'd know his lingo well enough to make him understand. I've found him useful, I can tell you, many a time. I never could talk any language myself but what my poor old mother learnt me, and you've no idea what a hell of a job I've had to get some of the foreigners I've met to understand plain English. They talk any sort of muck but that. I got through all right at the finish always; only it was a lot of bother, and Black Walt, as we call him—you'll guess why—comes in very handy. I haven't much time, but I must tell you this:—

"There were four German traders came aboard here (Aden) to arrange a bit of business. I'd seen them a good many times, and I never would cotton to their lingo. What we said to one another had always to be said in English. I'd often noticed they'd a lot of chatter among themselves before they screwed me down to a bargain at as low a figure as they could get me to take. This time they were talking just

as usual, and I noticed how throng Black Walt was with a knot in a rope hanging near where they stood. It must have been an awkward knot, the time he took up with it. But at last he made me a sign, and I called him to me, walking away with him.

"He let me into a secret. The Germans were plotting to Jew me into taking their freight at about half the rate they knew anybody else would want, and chuckling over the way they'd bested me the year before. I remembered that bargain well, when Walt reminded me. I could have swore, I was so mad to see how I'd been done; for I'd lost pounds by that contract. But I was ready for them this time, thanks to Walt. You see what comes of knowing a bit about their ways when you have to do with thieves and Germans! I didn't let on that I'd any suspicion I was in danger of being diddled, but just told them, fair and plain, I'd no room for their stuff only at top rates. They'd depended on me, and they had to let me bring it, though they paid twice as much as they'd ever paid me before. Mind you, I got their load, and they paid smiling, when it came to; there's the rub. That will show you what a useful fellow you've made me a present of—a rare, merry lad, full of devilment, and though, from the character you gave me

of him, I thought he'd stand watching at first, such a genius for business I can't help wondering how long he'll put up with his job here. He's miles too clever for anything I've got to offer him. Still, he seems satisfied at present. Let us hope he'll keep so. Your other fellows are all right."

After learning how fully his time was occupied, it was not reasonable to look for long or frequent letters from the genius. I had to rest content for many a year with one only, posted at Teneriffe within a month of his going aboard ship. Though brief, it is a gem in its way:—

"The cloistered copyist of German theological essays was not unhappy in his work, for, shut out from the joys of the world's life, he yet had hope. Gates burst open, a generous friend discovered, liberty found to breathe the fresh Atlantic breezes, he looks back to his barred and gloomy cell, horrified and amazed as he reflects how once his soul was satisfied to endure half-involuntary captivity. He knows it would kill him now. No sad-faced prisoner here, but a jovial sailor-man, merry and buoyant of heart, he is become a new creature. What an inspiration, sir, that brilliant decision to nurse a sick soul to health in an ocean cradle! Accept the everlasting gratitude of a mute restored, a captive released. 'In the pink,' as

> the vulgar have it, he has for company the best of good fellows, and the ruler of the ship is a very great gentleman. The erstwhile hermit thanks you a thousand times; also he sends greetings to the wise men of your city who, of their charity, gave not cups but buckets of cold water to relieve the parching need of a stranger in their gates."

Accepting the stories of captain and shipmate as confirmation of the evidence his own letter offered, I took it quite for granted that Greenway was on the highroad to a future when he would appear as skipper of a vessel of his own. There is something indescribably pleasing in the thought that one has had a hand in setting an erring man's feet once more in the right path. I got as much joy that way as it is possible for a mortal to feel, making sure that further news of my protégé would only add to my delight at the success he made of life. I will not say I was utterly disappointed. I was not; hope was deferred in painfully lengthy fashion, but in the result the thing I waited for was well worth while.

II.

WALTER GREENWAY, BEDOUIN.

As it was with Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, so it has been from creation, so it is to-day. Generous, impetuous youth is ever eager to bear tidings which seem good. Consideration of heavier parts lying concealed is the burden of the experienced, who are at pains to prepare for questions which, asked, may, unless answered with something of the delicacy of the matchless Cushi, involve confusion and distress it would obviously be more merciful not to raise, even at cost of suppressing tidings altogether.

Time was when the good news I had of Greenway from the ship would have sent me post-haste to his father's house. Something of experience, also something of Captain Smith's intangible uncertainty, caused me to hesitate. Still the pull was strong. I knew from the police how the father's absence at his son's last trial was not due to indifference, but helplessness. Nobody in the world, except perhaps his mother, would have rejoiced more greatly to hear of Walter at last following a straight course.

It was precisely because experience of many a similar case taught me how keenly they must feel, that I resolutely denied myself the pleasure of telling them the promising beginnings I knew of. It was certainly better to wait for convincing proof of final settlement. The last thing I desired was to raise false hopes.

There, in the heart of the country, in a sweet, ivy-covered house—in front, a smooth velvety lawn sloping gently to a park-like meadow, decked in spring-time with a delightful carpet of primroses and cowslips, ornamented here and there with magnificent forest trees, and merry with the songs of birds; behind, a spacious, high-walled, old-world garden, with a lovely pleasance, gay all summer with roses; the massive tower of the ancient village church casting its shadow over all,—in such peaceful setting Walter's parents dwelt, life drawing near its evening time.

The father, erect and small of figure, grey-headed, but looking still at men with honest eyes, undimmed by nearly fourscore years, his grave handsome face refusing to disclose the sorrow gnawing at his heart, bearing all things with the calm dignity of an educated Englishman of the old school, was not the man to approach with any loosely woven story. The same gifts of common-sense and self-effacement which taught him to rest satisfied with a very moderate fortune when, retiring from business at

late middle age, he determined that his only daughter Victoria should not fall a victim to the consumption which threatened her if anything he could do, any sacrifice he could make, would save her life—those same gifts would cause him to weigh well any statement concerning the one surviving child to whom such a parent must certainly have given every consideration already.

Indeed he had done what he could for Walter, if not perfectly, at least as well as he was able. It was his firm conviction that a father's wisest plan was to give his son such an education as would fit him for a position in which it would be his own fault if he failed to earn a sufficient living. He reserved enough to effect this when he invested the bulk of his small means in annuities payable during the lives of his wife and himself. Only by some such method could a sufficient sum be raised annually to meet the expense he went to in giving his daughter a chance of a cure.

He had no need of greater disappointment than he experienced when the object for which he schemed was known to have failed; but having bowed to that blow, he learned gradually how what he sacrificed primarily for another had brought the reward of quiet retirement long continued to himself and the wife who fully entered into all his thoughts and desires.

After Victoria died, the brother, who, worshipping

her, had hurried home every week-end from the work he was set on leaving school at eighteen years old, took a violent dislike to the place, getting it into his mind, quite erroneously, that his sister would have lived elsewhere. So his visits home grew infrequent, getting as few as twice a year by the time he was one-and-twenty, and his parents lost that close touch which so many parents lose, to their great grief. Like others, they became reconciled to his going his own way. He appeared to be doing well on the whole, being given, at twenty-two years old, full control of the foreign correspondence of the great commercial house he had entered. He was a highly accomplished linguist, and his salary being quite good, the object his father had in spending money freely on his education seemed fully attained. The father would have liked it better if the son had been content with less expensive holidays. Yachting trips are costly; and Walter was keen on yachting trips. He had other ways of getting rid of money, too, added to a general open-handedness which suggested he had never any considerable worry about the investment of any balance at his bank.

Those who knew him best set his extravagant good nature to the credit of heredity on his mother's side. He certainly resembled his mother in looks; hers was the pleasant face, dark as a Spaniard's, and the great, dreamy, dark eyes, capable of lighting

up with wonderful fire; hers also was the small, lithe, active figure, eternally in motion, and the consistent good-temper so conspicuous in her son. No doubt she had no lack of lovers in her day. To the end she held the heart of that motherless schoolfellow of her son whose father, when school-days were done, gave both youths berths in the office of the great company he controlled. This is the picture Major Mills drew of her while he served his country in Egypt, long after she died:—

> "As sweet a face as ever looked out upon this world, always pleasant, and mostly laughing, able to see a boy's point of view every time, and to enter into the very spirit of his jokes and pranks; never tired of helping to start us off on a picnic here or a fishing excursion there, soothing, with a confident smile, the grave Victoria (image of her father, and sharing his cautious and reserved, though kindly, disposition to the full) as she declared the girl had no need to fear for us; we could take care of ourselves. The way she packed our hampers, never a dainty forgotten, never a failure to realise the infinite capacity boys have for quantity in food and beverage; and the way she shook her merry curls when we came home with tattered clothing, then, after mock rebuke, swiftly darned away till all was as new again! I shall never see her like; there

is but one of her excellence for any of us to meet in a whole lifetime. She was gentleness and goodness personified. No wonder her son adored her! I have never been able to understand how he came to cease going home every week-end. Of course he worshipped Victoria, and was never quite the same after her death. But I'm sure he was almost as fond of his mother. How could he help it? No, I am mystified! If it had been me, I'd never have had a week-end anywhere but with a mother like that! I see her now. It's the easiest thing imaginable to picture a face always the same, always the very ideal of sweetness, joy, and love, when you know it as well as I was privileged to know it for above ten years."

As a set-off to any disquiet caused by his extravagant ways, Walter's parents knew him to retain the full confidence of his employer, whose son ran down with Walter twice a year for an all too brief renewing of happy memories of school holidays. These visits cheered the old people greatly. It was pleasant to hear their lad's praises sung by an admiring friend. They grew to regard those half-yearly visits with affectionate gratitude. It was counted for goodness in young men who had numberless attractions in the busy world, to remember them in their lonely dwelling, though one of the young men was their own son. Well, such

is the way of things. Old people listen with wonderful pride and hope as eager young minds open out their day-dreams and send up their confident ambitions untried by disappointment. There is fascinating charm in every new experiment in life, be our own experience whatsoever.

No doubt Walter was clever enough to go far. The firm he served was expanding every year. There was ample room both for him and his friend Mills to win their way to fortune together. His parents looked for nothing else, and what they looked for was entirely reasonable.

I think due weight must be given to this in considering the father's attitude when bitter disappointment came. Walter, still a spendthrift at five-and-twenty, had written home to say how thoroughly he was enjoying a yachting trip. The very next day the local police officer came to the house with news that he was in the lock-up of a seaside town, awaiting trial on a charge of burglariously entering a dwelling-house. I do not know whether the officer was diplomatic or not. There is no reason to suppose he discharged a thankless task other than kindly. Howsoever you put it, it is hard to tell worthy parents their son lies under a charge as grave as that. The mother was crushed terribly. They put her to bed, and the doctor kept her there a long while. It would be difficult to restore her from the shock, he said.

The father bore up well to outward appearance, forgetting nothing which would tend to make his wife comfortable during his absence at the hearing of the charge against their son in the far-away seaside place he journeyed to. But he would not be himself when he stood by the clerk's table in the Court to fail to offer any explanation for his boy's strange conduct.

What was said against Walter was that he had been seen to climb to the roof of a house left untenanted while the owners were on holiday, the police having the key. Two officers going in at the door, met him on the stairs, coming down from an attic he had entered by a window. Asked what business he had there, he replied that he was searching for friends he had met on the pier, and with whom he proposed taking supper—he thought they lived at that house. Asked who the friends were, and being unable to name them, he was marched off to the police station, where particulars of his parentage were ascertained that the father might be communicated with.

Reflection failed to enable him to remember his friends' names, yet he stuck to his tale in Court. This irritated the Bench, who thought the story an impudent invention, and the father was asked what light he could throw on the case. There was no doubt Walter had entered the dwelling-house, and his excuse seemed utterly incredible. He had not

been drinking. He had several pounds in his possession. Why should he have taken this strange course? The poor father's bewildered mind saw only two possible excuses. Either Walter was drunk, or else he was short of money. Both failing him, it appeared as though Walter had committed burglary because his heart was set that way. The father had no explanation to offer. Like the magistrates, he was distressed at what he thought a lying excuse, and he urged his son to speak the truth.

"I have spoken the truth," Walter declared from the dock. "If you don't believe me, I can't help it. Why should I want to break into people's houses, except for a joke? Surely my character up to now should clear me of a trumpery charge like this! I tell you I was on my way to supper with friends I met on the pier. I wanted to have a bit of fun with them, giving them a surprise by going in at an attic window, and I got to the wrong house; that was all. I can't remember the friends' names; I don't even believe they were mentioned—only the number of the house, and the street they live in. I got to the right number, and the wrong street; and for the life of me I can't think of the right street yet. But that's the whole truth, whether you believe it or not."

Nobody did believe it. His father, greatly distressed, had no more to say. The prisoner was told

how, if he elected to be dealt with summarily, the charge would be reduced to one of being on enclosed premises for an unlawful purpose, and he agreed to be dealt with by that Court. It was foolish of him, but he had no experience of court procedure, and did not know he would have stood a better chance at a higher court; also he wanted an unpleasant scene to be quickly over. The sentence of three months' imprisonment with hard labour surprised him a good deal, but he heard it like a man, and left the dock with a contemptuous smile on his face. All his lifelong good character went for nothing with the hasty man who presided over that Court. They could have done no more if he had been some idle vagabond unable to tell where he ever earned an honest living. Fortunately justices of their type are rare in England, but upon them rests the responsibility of giving the first push to Greenway in the criminal career he followed four years: upon them, and, in a lesser degree, upon his father, who ought to have seen him provided with able counsel, in which case such a travesty of justice would scarcely have been possible, though the father may be excused blame because of trouble at home, and his own ignorance of criminal procedure.

For there is no doubt that Walter's story was true. He was expected to supper that night by chance acquaintance he had picked up on the pier. They had invited him to share their last evening of

holiday-time, and, disappointed when he failed to come, left the place next day ignorant of the calamity in which he was involved. It was his friend Mills who traced the facts out too late to effect any remission of the sentence, and, unfortunately, too late to avert a complete change in Greenway's whole outlook on life.

Had his mother not collapsed at the ill news of his arrest, had she been able to attend the Court when he was on his trial, it is probable she would have understood her son well enough to realise, what his friend Mills told me recently, that he never grew out of boyhood. "He could no more refrain from picking up a handful of little pebbles, as we came from a play or a concert, and throwing them at a window where the light showed people going to bed, then drag me with him into concealment while we saw the light put out, a sash raised, and an inquisitive head pushed through, than a kitten can help chasing her tail," was the illustration his friend used to set out his peculiarly playful disposition. "He would never think," Mills went on, "of going to that house to supper like any ordinary person; to enter the place by an attic window, and to walk into a sitting-room and see folk gape in wonderment because no bell had rung and no outer door been opened, would be the best part of his evening's entertainment. He was always like it, and, in one way or another, he always will be. He's played

such tricks to my knowledge, that if anybody else had played I'd have sworn they were crazy."

What a pity Mills was not there to explain, as he would have been had the case gone for trial at a higher court; and what a pity the mother, who understood her son at least as well, could not be there too! You would say the presence of either in the petty court would have made that miscarriage of justice out of the question. As things were, Mills worked like the willing slave he was to rectify the tragic error committed.

He was ably seconded by his own father, who was very fond of Walter, sending a letter immediately to the prison telling him to go straight from there on discharge and resume duties where all was understood. With consistent wooden-headedness, the prison officials religiously observed regulations preventing the delivery of letters to short-term offenders till the morning of release. Having only his father's reproachful incredulity at the trial to tell him what his friends thought of him, Walter had brooded those three months, determining on discharge to put miles between himself and any place where he was known before imprisonment. They tell me at the prison that he made no remark when the waiting letters were given him, and that he read them in silence.

His old employer's letter, and three from the employer's son, his old schoolfellow, were alike

heartily sympathetic. There is no saying what his response might have been but for the contents of a letter from his father, handed to him with the rest.

His father's message was plain enough, but Walter failed to realise how prostrate his mother remained, and could not understand why he was asked not to go home, not believing what was said of the doctor fearing she was too weak to bear the excitement of seeing him; wherefore he misread his father's meaning, being twisted that way by his morbid reflections over the scene in Court. Whatever good effect the kindness of the Mills had upon his mind was nullified by anger at what he misunderstood to be a warning that the doors of home were closed against him for ever. That he regarded it in this strange light is shown by a letter he wrote those friends, full of gratitude for sympathy and offered help, but declaring foolishly how, since he was thought to be a thief, he was determined to earn the character.

And so, within a month, he was under arrest again on an exactly similar charge. Once more the father appeared to exhibit shame and bewilderment. After that he contented himself with sending letters and money to various prisons till his son had been six times convicted, when he decided it was hopeless to continue the ruinous task of attempting to help him. By this time the mother, a pitiful wreck of her former self, was able to get about the

house again with difficulty. They gave her better news of her son than was strictly true, and that was a further reason why he should keep away till his manner of life slightly justified the picture it was charitable to paint of him for her comfort.

I did not know the half of this at the time, only enough to feel it to be unwise to arouse hope which might be disappointed, and, having come to fuller knowledge, I am glad I did not emulate Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, in running to the distressed father of a reprobate with an imperfect tale. For, following his letter to England, and calling on me within three months of its delivery, Captain Smith told how Walter deserted ship at Colombo, twenty-five days after the letter was posted at Aden, and had neither been seen nor heard of since.

"He was all I said of him, and more," was the skipper's testimonial; "there was nothing wrong—nothing whatever; he went ashore, stayed there, failed to come aboard when we sailed, and was left behind. I'm sorry; he's a grand fellow, and I like him; but I expect he got tired of the monotony, and thought he'd make a change. Let's hope he won't go wrong again. He's no need to, with his ability."

It was good of Captain Smith to put it like that; but then, Captain Smith is nothing if not good, as a thousand witnesses can testify. He saw I was greatly disappointed, and made the best of things,

asking for another man merely to display the fact that he appreciated the difficulty of the work I try to do, and had by no means lost confidence in me. For a thorough great-hearted gentleman, commend me to that British sailor. It does one good only to meet his like.

The man who nurses the morally weak must be of kindred feeling with the mother teaching her infant to walk. The little one sets off eagerly in spite of recent falls, goes a few steps in great style, then wobbles uncertainly, and then, unless protecting arms be outstretched, reels, staggers, and goes down afresh. No mother looks for her child to learn to walk without meeting and overcoming the difficulties common to our nature. It is for her to do all she can to steer him through with as little hurt as may be. In the same way, the man who looks for one finding it hard to walk morally to rise from a fall and neither stumble nor make a further false step, is looking for something next to impossible, and thereby proving himself unfit for the task he undertakes.

Yet for all this, it is difficult to avoid depression of soul when good beginnings are undone. I will admit frankly that I felt Greenway's desertion of ship keenly. The care of many like men kept my mind from dwelling too exclusively on his doings But for seven years I conjured up, sadly enough, now and then, visions of what he might have

been had he made what I hoped of the chance given him.

Then, in November 1915, he recalled the fact of his existence very vividly in a letter, to my mind most diverting, calculated admirably to cause one to forgive everything recorded against him. It was also most difficult to arrange and follow, being written on five-and-twenty different scraps of faded yellow paper, and in a scrawl with a blunt lead pencil, often illegible, so that words had to be guessed at and filled in. This is the letter, as nearly as I can make it out:—

> "Somewhere in blessed Mesopotamia a poor deaf mute, a slender, swarthy, agile Bedouin, about my own age, and so like me, but for the clothing, that I could own him as a brother—somewhere in this blessed land that afflicted creature wanders, all unable to comprehend what his Mohammedan countrymen, their Turkish masters, and the German superbosses are about.
>
> "Respecting his affliction as by the hand of Allah, they suffer him to wander among their camps and entrenchments. They gaze upon him, half-amused, half in pity, as he views exposed cannon and machine-guns in childlike wonderment; they lead him along labyrinths of trenches for the pleasure of seeing his terror at the engines of destruction which bristle in concealed places; they give him of their food,

and, as he eats, they talk over their plans, and the German and Turkish commanders issue instructions: for he is deaf, he cannot hear: he is dumb and illiterate, he cannot tell. They know they have nothing to fear from him.

"Having meandered about till he is weary for change, he essays to move on, and none stay him. He is afflicted and bewitched; he must be pitied and left alone, lest any tormenting him should be likewise smitten or perish.

"Thus he wanders from camp to camp, his great, dark, frightened eyes seeming to grow ever darker, more lustrous, and more terror-stricken as he beholds preparations for he knows not what, but fears them as portending evil.

"Now and then he hovers about our lines; but mostly he shuns the society of infidels. Some of our men found him yesterday—a poor starveling; he had wandered up to our defences, seemingly ready to perish. They brought him in and set food before him. He ate ravenously, then spat on the ground, and looked for all the world like cursing the infidel dogs who had rescued and fed him. His face was a perfect study of mingled fear and impotence and rage. They tried to make him hear or speak, but failed. He grew weary of their attentions, and mooned off to headquarters, where somehow he secured admission.

"Of course they would be quite unable to glean from him the barest atom of that large store of information he must possess about the enemy's positions, defences, numbers, and what not. He has eyes to see if he has not ears to hear; but, alas! he is mute, and he cannot write. If our staff could only know what he has to tell were he willing and able! It might easily mean saving the lives of thousands of men, and wealth beyond the price of a king's ransom.

"He is uneasy as I write. It looks as though he were ready to move on. Likely enough he will leave here soon. I wonder if I dare trust this letter to him? I will risk it, I think. There is little in it, and the paper is not valuable: it is the best I can find. I have often wished to write to you, just to let you know I am doing my bit for Britain, under this scorching sun, out in Mesopotamia the blessed. It has struck me that I may as well break silence in describing one who is as I once essayed to be. Certainly he makes a much better mute than I did; but then, those wretched police were so confoundedly incredulous. Perhaps he isn't really a bit more clever, only more fortunate in dealing with true children of Allah instead of suspicious Christian dogs like those with whom I had to do.

"Well, he may lose the envelope containing these bits, exactly as if out of a waste-paper basket, or destroy it; but I will take the chance. If it fails to reach you, you will not miss it. If it does reach you, spare a prayer for this poor Bedouin outcast, for sake of the deaf mute you tried to talk with once in a police-cell, far away.

"I shall be longing to know whether this reaches you, for I have a strange faith in this mute—a sort of brotherly confidence,—and I beg you to write early and often if you get this invitation, as I somehow think you will. When you have written, care of that friendly Arab, as directed, I will send you a full account of my doings since my disappearance eight years ago, always supposing that a fairly adventurous cat has not been unfortunate enough to lose his ninth life."

So he was with the British force in Mesopotamia, acting as a spy, rendering that dangerous and invaluable service to his country in the guise of a Bedouin, and in his old *rôle* of deaf mute! It took my breath away when the truth dawned. Then, gradually, I realised his special fitness for such service—his command of the German tongue, which I knew of already, and his aptness for learning languages, which had doubtless enabled him to acquire an easy flow of Turkish and Arabic during his eight years' residence in the East. There was

biting irony in the remark that the man so like him as to be recognisable as his brother — himself, of course—stood mute among an unsuspecting enemy: "they give him of their food, and, as he eats, they talk over their plans, and the German and Turkish commanders issue instructions: for he is deaf, he cannot hear; he is dumb and illiterate, he cannot tell. They know they have nothing to fear from him."

I was very proud of the rogue. At last I could set out to meet his parents, fearing nothing of awkward questions. What was recorded there was enough to wipe out all his past transgressions. He was only one of many I knew whom the war had redeemed, but, reading his letter over and over again, I felt his was the most remarkable story which had come my way.

It did not take me long to reach the peaceful village I sought. The sweet old-world cottage, with its trim lawn and pleasant meadow, its well-stocked gardens, and the sentinel trees which had watched over the place for centuries — all was as Walter's eyes had seen a thousand times. My ring was answered by a smart serving-maid, who stared when I asked if his parents were at home, but, saying nothing, showed me into a cosy sitting-room.

There was a suspicious newness about carpet and furniture. Before a young lady entered, I began to fear the place was no longer tenanted by the people I sought. The house had been empty two

years when her husband bought it, the lady now informed me. The name I mentioned was that of a former owner. She was not quite sure—they would tell me at the vicarage,—but she feared the people I inquired after were no longer living. She was sorry to be of so little service, being new to the village and its inhabitants.

Nothing could have exceeded the kindness with which she spoke. I think she regarded me as a close relation of Walter's people. I suppose a certain disappointment I showed unconsciously gave her the impression. She was good enough to tell me I might look round the place if I cared, and to offer me refreshment. Explaining that I came with news I felt the old people, if alive, would be delighted to hear, but that I never knew them personally, I did the best I could to show appreciation of the consideration I was treated with, then went my way.

They told me at the vicarage that it was as was feared at Walter's old home. His mother had been dead four years, his father five. With the strange longevity of the afflicted, the mother had survived the father. The good news I brought had reached me too late. Their son had "come to honour, and they knew it not." He was the only child they left. No relation was known to live in the locality. There was an aunt somewhere, whose husband was Walter's father's executor, but

where to find the aunt the vicar could not tell. My hero belonged to a family very reserved; in fact the clergyman complained how he was five years in the parish before the father died, yet was never asked inside the house, consequently he could not be expected to know much of their affairs.

I did not say so, but it struck me as likely that was precisely why he was not asked inside the house — it was not desired that he should know much of their affairs. It is not easy for sensitive people with an erring only son to make friends. Their loneliness must have been touching, but better loneliness than mischievous tongues. Much as I regretted that I could not deliver the cheering news I had brought, I realised I had taken a wise course in suppressing a desire to bring earlier an imperfect tale. It would only have caused agonising doubt as to how their boy was faring in a land far away.

I found their graves in the quiet churchyard hard by their former home, then came away disappointed because no one near to Walter was left to hear of his doings, and of whom I might write in sending the reply he waited for.

III.

WALTER GREENWAY, SPY.

THE reply, when written, seemed altogether unworthy: Walter's letter was so fascinating, and I had really so little to say beyond expressing my own admiration for the service he was rendering, and an earnest hope that he would come safely through every hazardous mission. I felt what was badly needed was a word telling of the delight of people his own kith and kin, and such a word was utterly denied me. For what it was worth, I posted the letter to a curious address he gave, not without misgivings, for I wondered why on earth I could not have been told to send it to the British Expeditionary Force.

In February 1916 I heard from him again:—

> "How an evil reputation clings to a fellow, to be sure! I never said *I* was playing the part of deaf mute. I talked of one sufficiently like me to pass as my own brother; but, please, teacher, I didn't say it was me! Do, please, give him the credit he has earned.

Don't rob him of it to pass it on to a rascal like me.

"He deserves your sympathy. For affliction has been added to affliction. He got my letter posted, it seems—at our military post office, likely; then he meandered off to his true believing brothers, with whom he stayed over Christmas, although the children of Allah would know nothing of the Christian festival, of course.

"A deserter who came into our lines told how the mute's visit to our camp had become known to the enemy, and how he was received back by his brethren with some suspicion. They fired rifles immediately behind his ears to see if he would start at the sound: they marched him up to a big gun and stood him beside it till the air concussion of a score explosions caused him to bleed from ears and nostrils. He was deaf as a stone; it was evident that he heard not the semblance of a sound. They were satisfied about his hearing; but could he speak, after all?

"Hot irons applied to various tender parts were reckoned one good means for proving this: these being ineffective, though he will bear their scars to his grave, they tried tearing out a finger-nail or two; tears rained down his cheeks, but he uttered no more than a guttural moan. They were convinced. The

more callous amongst them swore frightful oaths; the more pious prayed lest vengeance should fall upon them for adding to the sorrows of one whom Allah had afflicted. Afterwards they treated him with marked kindness: so this deserter told. He was wandering up and down the camp, nearly recovered from the wounds their cruelty had inflicted, when he who gave this information left the place, for reasons of health, as he said. But he was a fine liar, and nobody could believe all he said. As there were Germans with the Turks and Arabs, however, the cruelty his tale told of might well be true.

"It was true. A week later, the mute turned up in our lines for the last time. Gangrene had supervened that wrenching out of finger-nails. The doctors had to take off his left arm. Then a marvel happened. He began to speak. Vengeance fell heavily upon those miserable followers of the true Prophet for their lack of charity. He gave away all their plans, describing their positions, and batteries, and encampments, with a precision and accuracy I should never have thought possible in a simple child of the desert.

"He is rather a wreck now; perhaps they gave him poor food when they suspected him of treachery, poor beggar—for it turned out

that the deserter's tale was substantially true; and he certainly had drunk foul water, for dysentery was added to the trouble with his arm, and the doctors had enough to do to pull him through. Everybody was wondering what would become of the poor body, when he coolly told us he had a little place of his own not a thousand miles from Aden. Once he got there, he said, he would do nicely. A wife and three bonnie children were awaiting his return home. He had been settled in that district eight years, and hearing there was war, had felt his blood stirred with a longing to take some part 'for George' in the fight, calling our gracious King by name in a fashion perhaps excusable in one so long a mute.

"By strange fortune I have my place not far from Aden, too; and a wife and three children waiting, also, for my return; and I have lost an arm, and had dysentery; how like we are, to be sure! Well, I cannot blame you if you still refuse to own my brother. But I shall not forsake him—I shall stick to him like his very shadow—for he has earned my respect.

"We are 'blood brothers' as he says, having gone through the same dangers, fought in the same company, and been wounded with the same wounds. We will retire together, honour-

ably discharged, unfit for further active service. We will make our way together to that little spot near Aden, which is home to us both. Perhaps I will tell you more of him when I get there.

"I must say a word or two about myself in my closing lines. I saw the little place I have mentioned as we sailed up the Red Sea, and I was dreaming of it all the way back to Colombo. I could not get it out of my mind, so I left the ship and returned there.

"I had fallen in love very badly with a bit of country, beautifully situated on rising ground, and plentifully wooded. I cannot for the life of me tell why, but of course there was a woman in it, seen at Aden. I made up my mind to do something to enable me to make my home in that spot, even if I could only manage to visit it at holiday time.

"The stars favoured me. The little spot I had seen from the ship became my home. I have a wife there; if I brought her to England people would turn their noses up because she is not white-skinned; but she is pure as a lily, and her heart is like gold. She is much more British, too, than many of her white sisters who call themselves Englishwomen. She did not demur for an instant when she saw I longed to take a hand in the

fight. Nay, she made it easy for me to go, letting me understand that she was quite able to run our little plantation whilst I was away.

"Unfortunately she cannot read or write. I have heard nothing of her since I left home last June, and I am anxious to know how she is doing. I don't care who knows, either; I'm longing to see her again, as pretty a mother of as pretty a couple of girls and as bonnie a lad as ever were born. What do I care if they are dark-skinned? If I were not swarthy, where would my bit of spying have come in? There, I have given the whole show away now. I may as well tell you how it came about; for really it is pride that causes me to write at all.

"Whilst I tried to conceal my bit of work, I did want you to know that that scamp of a deaf mute who put you to the trouble and expense of sending him to sea, only to desert his ship within a year, had British blood and British pluck in him, and the devilment helped more than it hindered him when the time for action came.

"I knew no army drill; besides, I guessed they might sniff out my character if I applied for enlistment. It struck me that I might work off that deaf and dumb trick on the Arabs and Turks, and I felt I could perhaps

bring a little information in if I came across any German officers. They would hardly expect a beggar Bedouin mute to know their language. Well, it came off; and three fingernails, and then an arm, came off with it; and a few scars which won't come off were added as a sort of make-up. But I played the game better than I did when less depended on it. I think it was worth playing; all the more as our own men were about as mystified as the rest—all but one or two, who learned something from the Bedouin mute which I hope will help their plans a little.

"I have slipped away as quietly as I came. I could do no more good there, a bit of a wreck physically, and my spy game played out. But somebody is waiting for me at home, thank God. I wish everybody could be sure of such a welcome as I shall get. It will pay for all. Good luck to you, sir; good-bye."

"About how many letters do you get a week?" a magistrate asked me, after piecing together the five-and-twenty scraps of paper comprising the November letter, and the seven-and-twenty making up this, and reading the contents of both with keen interest. I replied I was at that time receiving a weekly average of a hundred and twenty.

"Well," he continued, "if the war lasts twenty years, and your supply of letters is maintained

you'll get none more strange than these among all the hundred and twenty-four thousand odd you stand to receive. It's the oddest story of real life I ever read. You ought to put it in a book. It's as good as a novel, and more interesting, because it's true. They ought to give that fellow the Victoria Cross. He's a brick, and no mistake."

Not in a book, exactly, but in something some of us think even better, that story was put. In June 1916, readers of 'Blackwood's Magazine' the world over were told Walter Greenway's amazing tale. Letters filled with admiration of his pluck, and of the devotion he showed for his Arab wife, came to me from every quarter. I was still receiving tokens of popular interest in his career when, on a Thursday morning early in October that same year, I was called from my immediate duties to interview an Army officer desiring to see me.

It was my first introduction to Major Mills, who had read Greenway's story in the Egyptian desert. It had struck him as he read that he knew the man. Surely it was he who was with him, first at school, and later at a desk in a great commercial office! They had been close companions. He knew his old schoolfellow's character perfectly. He was quite capable even of the superb stoicism described in his tale of what he had undergone.

Mentioning a name, the Major inquired if that was not the real name of my hero. I replied to

his query by saying candidly I could on no account tell him—it being flatly against my rule to tell anybody such secrets. He understood; even if a strong expletive he used indicated disappointment, at least he appreciated the sense the rule contains. Producing a small miniature of two photographs taken side by side, he asked me if the man I saw there was Greenway. I acknowledged identity.

"Yes," he went on, "I knew it was he as soon as I read the tale. You won't know the lady. It's his sister Victoria, who died when he was eighteen and a half, and whose death made a great impression on him. He was passionately fond of her, and he couldn't understand a good God who let her die. It almost made an atheist of him, if not quite. I took that miniature from a fading photograph of Victoria placed side by side with one of her brother—Walter, as you call him.[1] His was quite new. That accounts for both faces looking about the same age, though there was really ten years between them.

"I got to know Walter at Rugby. We were there together four years—he was at Trent before that. Mother being dead, and father always up to the neck in business, you can understand what a pleasure it was to me to be invited to spend a big

[1] It will be noticed that the Major called him Walter as well.

part of every holiday at Walter's home. His father was a grand old English gentleman, a bit shy and reserved, but very pleasant and tolerant. Victoria was an angel; too good for this world; gentle as a child, and too tender for words—absolutely unselfish, dodging about after her father and us boys continually, for all she had one foot in the grave, as everybody knew but herself. Walter doted on her, as I've told you; you could never see him in the same room but he was by her side. The odd thing was the contrast between them. Out of the house, he was all noise and movement and fun. She, poor girl, never got out very far. When he came in he sobered down at once; that seemed to brighten her up, as if she wanted to cheer him, talking about walks they would have together on days which never came, for ten to one it would rain or be foggy, and she must stay indoors. I'm mentioning this because I feel he'd have turned out a different fellow here if she'd lived. She was everything to him. After he'd worked his boisterous high spirits off, he was always with her.

"His mother was a person I haven't time to describe now—it would take all day, and I've less than an hour. I'll write you something about her[1]; just now I'll only say she was the very best woman

[1] It is given in chapter ii.

I ever met. I spent the happiest days of my life at her home, and I shall never forget her.

"Walter was one of those boys who never find it the least bit of trouble to learn anything. He was fond of music. If he'd gone in for it, he'd have got his doctor's degree like a shot, or he'd have made a first-class actor, in fact anything he set his mind on. But his really strong suit was languages. Bless you, he'd walk into those old Greek and Latin parties like anything, and be as happy as a sand-boy in their company. When he tackled the modern side, he found it no more trouble than cracking nuts. He was a big favourite at school—and a big rogue. I wish I'd time to tell you a thousandth part of his tricks, but they must go for the present. You'll be able to form an idea. His eyes will have told you something. And you know already he'd always sooner walk on the tops of walls, or roofs of houses, than along footpaths, any time.

"Well, when we left school, my governor offered him a post in the office, where the old gentleman was putting me, anyhow. He took it, and his people were very pleased about it. He simply tumbled into office routine. Nothing was the least trouble. By the time he was two-and-twenty, the governor made him responsible for the whole show as far as foreign correspondence went — French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian; he spoke the lot, besides being able to write at least three others.

The governor thought him a perfect treasure—and the governor's no fool, I can tell you. When both a man's predecessor and also his successor in a job make a hundred and fifty mistakes where the other fellow made one, you know how to value the other fellow. Trust the governor for that!

"After Victoria died, Walter preferred to spend holidays anywhere except at his people's home. I was bent on seeing them, and made him take me now and then; but mostly we went yachting or sailing together when we got the chance. As it happened, we had to take our holidays separately in the summer he went wrong. I was at the office while he was on a trip round the coast. He didn't return to work when he should have done, and we made inquiries. You could have knocked either the governor or me down with a feather when we heard he'd been sent to prison for attempted burglary.

"I went into things, and found, of course, he'd been wrongfully condemned; but I was too late to set things right. Why he wrote as he did when he came out of prison, declining our offer to see him on his feet again, and saying he'd made up his mind to go to the devil, I never could make out.

"Both the governor and I kept on trying to get in touch with him — we wrote letters to him over and over again, but he wouldn't let us help him. You'll know it broke his poor old mother's heart; and his father, who did all he could to pull him up,

was never the same again. There, I've told you about all I know. Can you tell me anything more than I've read in 'Blackwood.' How did he seem when he spoke of his parents? They were better people than any one would judge from your account of what he said of them."

Most of what Major Mills told me was news at the time, and I was particularly grateful for the trouble he had taken in rooting me out to tell it. I had little to give him in return. Walter had been reticent about his past. I could not remember him saying more of his parents than is contained in his reference to them, when describing the prison chaplain's intercession on his behalf. It did not strike me as stamping them other than excellent people. Probably the Major's veneration for their memory made him unduly sensitive.

Having dealt with Walter's antecedents, and coming to talk of his recent doings, we were equally enthusiastic over the obvious excellence of the wife he had found. It was evident from what he said of her that she had more than taken the place of the lost Victoria, whose going was such a tragedy for him.

"Do you know," the Major remarked, "I always believed he'd never marry. His sister was so perfect in his eyes, I made sure he'd never meet another woman able to compare with her. I'd give anything to see this little Arab lady. She's pretty, I'll

be bound; but she'll have a great deal more than a beautiful face. What he says about her having a heart like gold means a lot. Depend upon it, he's found somebody who understands him. The miracle is that it's taken a woman of another race altogether to do it.

"You can tell he's still the same lively spark he always was. She'll have seen him play a few pranks, you bet. That woman's got brains. She knows how the best natures are often concealed under an exterior all fun and devilment—not all cant and pious humbug, as so many seem to imagine.

"Then those children: won't he make a fuss of them! He could never bear to hurt a fly. The little things won't be spoilt; they'll inherit too much good sense from their parents; but, if they didn't, they'd be likely to take a queer turn if what Solomon says about sparing the rod and spoiling the child has much in it. I should like to see them for their grandmother's sake, as well as for their father's. Well, I may do when the war's over. It won't be my fault if I don't. They can spare me from business for the period of the war: I must see if they won't spare me a few months when it's over.

"How the beggar would enjoy himself, spying in the Turkish trenches! I can see him at it, making believe he was frightened to death at the guns, then creeping away to our lines, making out he was

famished — perhaps actually famished, nobody can tell,—then spitting on the ground, 'and looking for all the world like cursing the infidel dogs (our own men, mind!) who rescued and fed him,' and then mooning off to headquarters to tell his tale to one or two officers, who must be a good deal wiser for his visit—if they've lived through the awful mess the authorities made of things.

"Nobody but he could have carried on through that trial by rifles and cannon-shot and burnings, and wrenching out of finger-nails! Then think of him getting away from those devils, half-dead with illness following the torture they inflicted, and weak with dysentery. Who besides him would have reached our lines alive? And the tale he put up when he did get there! It was just like him; to all but one or two, whom he let into his secrets, he was still the beggar Bedouin he pretended to be, romancing about a wife and children whom nobody would believe he'd got. You can depend upon it our Tommies would think he was 'blowing the gaff' on his old associates for the cruelty they had shown him, and then slinking off for fear of vengeance, telling the tale he did about his destination to throw folk off the scent. It would please him no end to have them pitying him for a miserable Arab as he mooned away.

"I've seen a few of the antics he's played. Have you noticed he's lost the little finger of his right

hand? No; he has though! There was a pigeon's nest in a high tree on the fringe of a thick wood. He went up to count the eggs—only that, for he was so tender-hearted he couldn't bear the idea of taking them away. The tree, like those all round, was in good leaf, and he couldn't be seen while he was climbing or when he reached the nest. We hadn't bargained for anybody rook-shooting, though it was rook-shooting time, the trees getting their leaves very early that year. However, a farmer, pottering about with a small-bore rifle, fancying himself a shot, fired at a rook in the last tree where rooks were, the bullet going twenty or thirty yards wide of the mark and smashing Walter's little finger as he stretched out his hand to lay firm hold of a branch so as to peer into the bird's nest in his own tree, which chanced to be next to the one the sportsman supposed himself to be firing into.

"He was fifteen then. Most lads of his age would have tumbled out of the tree from fright. That was never Walter's style. He came down quietly, to show me the bleeding finger, little better than pulp. I was horrified, but he only laughed. 'Come on,' he whispered, putting the damaged hand in his pocket, 'let's go and see who's shooting.' We went and found the farmer. When he saw the fellow had no notion of having hurt anybody, he didn't disturb him. 'Haven't you winged a bird?' he asked; 'I thought I saw one fly out of that tree yonder, a bit

knocked about.' 'I shouldn't wonder,' the farmer replied; 'it isn't often as I bring a gun out without hittin' some'at.'

"That suited Walter down to the ground, and he was all the better pleased as the farmer couldn't make out what he laughed so heartily about, nor where I saw the joke. It threatened to be sultry, indeed; for it was soon plain he suspected we were taking a rise out of him. I'll lay a trifle he was glad to see our backs.

"'Come along,' Walter said, when we got out of the wood, 'I must let a doctor see this finger—not Victoria's doctor, though—somebody who won't tell. But I must bandage it up a bit first—it's bleeding—my pocket's full.' He was right—or rather he would have been right if his pocket had been water-tight. He tied his handkerchief tight round his wrist to stop the blood from reaching his finger; then, when we came to a stream, he washed with his whole hand the side of his jacket containing the pocket his smashed finger had soiled. All the while I was too frightened to do anything; it knocked me out to see how much blood he'd lost. He merely laughed. We walked five miles to a doctor, who whipped off the finger, there being nothing else for it, then wanted to send us home in his dog-cart. I was ready, I can tell you, but Walter wasn't. The doctor couldn't persuade him. He'd made up his mind to walk, and walk we did—the whole six

miles—a mile beyond the wood where the accident took place.

"I remember well how I wondered why he hadn't gone to the family doctor over the business. It wasn't like him to hide anything. I wasn't a bit surprised when he went straight to his mother as soon as we got home, and told her with a laugh what had happened. It turned out that he wanted to keep it from Victoria that the finger was gone—she was so sensitive, and he was afraid she'd ask her own doctor awkward questions if he went to him.

"We were away from school with measles at the time, and weren't even supposed to be out of doors; but the occurrence did no harm except that loss of a finger. We were both ready for school when the doctor felt it safe to give us our clean bills of health,—the finger healed almost of itself. I don't remember him ever making a whimper about it.

"On the way to Rugby, he would have us leave the train at Birmingham to post a little parcel we'd made up with great glee. It was the smashed finger he'd begged of the doctor—preserved in spirits of wine—in a natty little glass jar, enclosed in a stout wooden box we'd made for the purpose. It was a little present for the sportsman, don't you see; Walter had written a note in a disguised hand, telling him he'd much pleasure in sending the carcase of a bird he thought he'd like to have, as

he could assure him he'd shot it in a given wood on a given day; the anonymous sender, who had picked it up, presenting it with compliments.

"We heard a good deal more of that, for the sportsman, knowing Walter's father had been a chemist, took the jar to him, and asked if he could tell what sort of bird was in it. He told him, and very nasty he was about it, I can tell you. He cut up so rough, indeed, that Walter's father, who wasn't good at seeing a joke, made us write the sportsman an apology for what the old gentleman called 'our insulting behaviour.'

"I mention it as one of many things in my mind which show the Walter you write about in 'Blackwood' to be the same old Walter he always was. There's always a birthday wherever he is. He can't help it. He must be playing his tricks, but he's always willing to pay his share. He caught it badly from the Turks, no doubt. We don't know half they got from him in return, though. It's not his style to make too much fuss of his own doings."

The time the Major stated he had at his disposal had expired long before this, but his story threw so strong a light on portions of his friend's history, obscure to me till he called, I did not feel able to remind him of the fact. Fortunately, I remembered that a few readers had doubted whether the records of the spy were descriptive of real events, or merely

high-class fiction, before he discovered the time for himself.

"I've no doubt in my own mind," I said; "I feel certain that he tells in his letters actual matters of fact. If he had wished to romance, I don't see why he should have waited so long to write; and, anyhow, I don't see why he should address romance to me more than, say, the prison chaplain, who evidently was also impressed with him before he went away. Still I have been asked whether I think his story true. You know my opinion. I should like yours."

"True, sir—every word," was the instant reply. "The beggar knew he'd done something worth talking about, and, having felt conscience prick a good many times for dropping you after your kindness to him, he seized the chance and wrote. He tells you that himself; and that's Walter down to the ground.

"You'll hear from him again, if he gets home; though how he's going to reach Aden, if he really hangs out there, the Lord only knows. Have you ever thought how far away he is, and what a howling wilderness he has to cross?"

It is odd that neither of us remembered the sea route.

"He's a tremendous distance from Aden, certainly, where he writes from," I agreed, showing the original letters; "but," I added, pointing to the queer address near Mocha he gave me so as to facilitate communication with him, "he must have some

fairly simple means of getting in touch with people there.

"I got his first letter early last November, and replied to it almost at once. He writes again in January, rather late, probably. Anyhow, my letter must have reached him within two months of its starting from here. I imagine his friends have a way of sending him news."

"What about his remark that he had heard nothing of his wife since he left home, then?" the Major asked, tripping me up.

"Ah, I'd forgotten that!" I was forced to admit. "Still, at least, the letter reached him. Perhaps the person who acts as his agent is not in communication with his wife. I admit I'm putting the best face I can on things. I know it's nine months since he wrote in the maimed state he describes, and I sometimes feel afraid something's gone wrong. I'm glad you think he'll write again if he does reach home. I feel sure you're right there; but will he get home?"

"That's the question," the Major agreed; "and it's no use us trying to settle it; we can only take Pa Asquith's counsel and 'wait and see.' Going back to what you say about doubters, you mustn't expect everybody to believe a strange tale like Walter tells. 'Is it true?'—'A damned good yarn,'—'A remarkable romance,'—'An amazing bit of rattling good fiction,'—there are a few samples of comments

I've heard in the officers' mess when the tale's been discussed. But would it please him to tell a yarn so tame that everybody would swallow it without a query? Not if he's the same beauty I used to know,—and I can see he hasn't altered much. If you'll take a tip from me, you'll print everything he sends you. He'll never lay claim to any deed of daring he hasn't done, that's certain; he'll err on the other side a good deal, probably, but his facts will be all right so far as he gives them at all. As for his style—well, Greenway's Greenway. I guessed him under that fancy name you've given him, and I knew I wasn't wrong. Let me hear as soon as ever you've more news of him, for you'll have more if he's alive."

The Major looked at his watch; the hour he set out to give me had been doubled.

"There," he exclaimed, "I've been yarning about this rascal of ours, and not noticed how the time flew! I must see how soon I can get another train, that's all. By the way, you don't seem to know he's an aunt living—at least she was living awhile ago; I think you'd find it worth while getting to know her. She's a good sort—and so is her husband; Walter and I have had many a happy afternoon at their place—it's not so very far from his old home. Stay; I may as well leave you this miniature —you may care to have it, and I've the negative, so I can spare it. Now, don't forget to let me have

the next instalment of this Greenway tale, there's a good fellow. Good-bye."

It was uncommonly kind of Major Mills to take so much interest in my hero as to put such a valuable amount of information concerning him at my disposal. I feared I should not be granted the luck to bestow the reward he desired, my hope of hearing more of Greenway being of the slightest, and almost totally disappearing when the Major left.

IV.

WALTER GREENWAY, LOVER.

If Walter thought that British folk would admire his pluck when he wrote the marvellous story of his service as a spy, making so little of the terrible experiences he had undergone — describing everything in the easy-going style of one telling the curious doings and sufferings of a stranger whom he had chanced to meet, and whose out-of-the-way tale mildly interested him,—he was right. But he went wrong in imagining that any mortal's nose was the least bit likely to turn up regarding the Arab wife he worshipped. His letter had scarcely been read in my house, when my wife and her friends were busy wondering what tokens of affection and esteem they could send to a dark-skinned sister, whose heroic patriotism and pureness of soul her husband so well described, and to the children of whom he was so proud.

They decided to send two little dolls, daintily dressed, well calculated to delight girls of tender years the world over, a picture-book of a kind likely

to prove attractive to a very small boy; with a dressing-jacket, scarf and apron, a few handkerchiefs and some bead necklaces it was thought might please the children's mother. They had little to guide them in deciding what to send. There was no indication of his wife's tastes in Walter's letters. It seemed best to rely on what is generally held pleasing, paying due regard to materials and colours popular in the East. I do not say the ladies were by any means satisfied with their gifts when they made up a parcel in which I enclosed a four-bladed knife for Walter himself, and a box of chocolates and other sweetmeats for the family generally. But at least it was felt that the best had been done which seemed possible under the circumstances; and, after all, the intention was to convince Greenway that his countrywomen by no means despised the pretty Arab he had made his wife.

The parcel went off in April to that address near Mocha which served well enough when I sent a letter there in the previous November, but which I had come to entertain some doubt about, since I realised how far away it was from the spot where Walter was when he wrote last. Absence of news of the fate of the parcel had awakened more anxiety when several generous readers of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' interested in his story told in the number for June 1916, wrote to me offering to repeat what my wife and her friends had done. It seemed

unsafe to risk more consignments without better hope of the address than I by now held. A more pleasing matter was the strong testimony I had on every hand of the pride and affection which people felt for Walter and his family. As I told Major Mills later, a few here and there regarded his story as too strange to be true, but their incredulity only heightened my own delight. I knew how Walter would have relished their unbelief.

There was no response to a letter I sent him when forwarding the June number of 'Blackwood,' giving him a chance of reading his own story. For all the pretence I did the best I could to keep up, in my heart I had set him down as dead from the results of that torture and privation he had told about, when, in the middle of October, not a week from the date of Major Mills' visit, a package of botanical specimens reached me, evidently the gift of some friend abroad.

I had a good many friends abroad at the time. Some of them credited me with hobbies and attainments to which I was never able to lay the least claim. One mistakenly thought me to care about beetles, another had got it into his head that I dote on spiders, and a third that I am learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians and adore mummies. As I care about as much for the study of botany as of beetles or spiders or mummies, my gratitude at being remembered was greater than my

interest in the botanical specimens the postman brought me.

Neither writing on label nor postmark were illuminating. Opening the package, I found it to contain coarse grasses surrounding a single stalk of a plant of the orchid tribe, the closed dry leaf of which might hide a flower. As a matter of fact it hid fragments of paper rolled into pellets, which I have smoothed out, and from which I have laboriously pieced together three distinct letters, all full of news of Greenway, all jumbled up when they came into my hands, and all legible only with difficulty in many parts. It has been exceedingly difficult to fit the scores of bits into which the sheets were torn, and rubbed parts here and there have involved some guesswork. I have done the best I can, and I believe my version represents what Walter wrote, if not quite, at least tolerably accurately.

The letters speak for themselves. There is no need for me to say how very welcome any further botanical specimens from the East would be. I can certainly promise for them my closest personal attention. And after recent happenings anything is possible, though, alas, Walter will himself despatch no more!

I will give the letters in the order they were written. Here is the first, dated 10th April 1916:—

"That Bedouin mute I told you about—he *had* a job to get home. The windows of heaven

were open day and night. He toiled and waded, slipped and slurred, through mud-bottomed lagoons and miry sloughs. Dysentery returned. He struggled along on hand and knees till strength gave out, and he was compelled to wriggle along like a snake, groaning in the morning, 'Would Allah it were even!' and at even, 'Would Allah it were morning!' from sorrow of heart.

"His pace, when he crawled out of the region of perpetual rain, was the pace of a snail. Now, frost by night and a scorching sun by day only varied his misery. Most men would have prayed to die, but not he. Soft, beautiful, brown eyes blazing with love peered beseechingly into his own through all. He pressed on, though it cost him excruciating torture. He was determined to kiss again the sweet brown face those eyes were set in. He would feel once more the rapture of those soft delicious cheeks laid upon his own. The music of children's voices stirred him to tears. Fancy must be clothed in reality. He would not die till once again those darling heads had nestled their curls upon his breast, and once again those sweetest lips had breathed into his ears the magic word father.

"He reached Basra more dead than alive, where by the grace of Allah he met his father-in-law, whose ship made sail for Mocha within

two days, calling at Aden late in March. Better than he felt at Basra, but still weak and ill, he set out instantly for his home, coming up to the fringe of date-palms in front of his little place one evening as the sun sank. Resting as much from lack of strength as lack of light, he waited for moonrise, then crawled through the trees, weariness all gone from ecstasy at getting home, which even gave him energy to rise to his feet and run a few paces. But the sight which met his gaze made him cry out in terror. A heap of ashes were where his dwelling-place had been. Instinct told him what had chanced. The enemy had discovered and avenged his service to Britain, firing his home and harrying his crops. Where, where were wife and children? Had the destroyers come by night while they slept? Did their dear bones mingle with those silent ashes?

"Down he went like the most ancient of human sufferers upon his heap of ashes in an agony of grief. Surely he had died of a broken heart, but merciful nature, refusing to endure more, wrapped him in a swoon. He woke presently in drowsy fashion. A tender arm supported his head. A gentle voice coaxed him. He swallowed a preparation of arrowroot. His eyes were opened. He recognised his angel of deliverance. Sitting beside him, holding his

head upon her breast, her face now gazing upward in devout thanksgiving, now cast down to sprinkle his own with tears falling from those wondrous eyes, her soft arms clasped about him as they might have clasped a little child, was she whose spirit had accompanied him in all his wanderings—his precious, lovely, womanly wife.

"She would not let him speak a word. The children were at hand, she told him, safe and well. He was very poorly, and must rest. Desiring no more, he let her cover him with rugs, and sank to sleep in her arms. Afterwards they carried him by easy stages to her father's place, miles away, where health and strength came back.

"Turks, they told him when he could bear it, had swooped down from the north—horsemen, fifty strong. By the mercy of Allah, his wife, working in the field at noonday, her babies with her, was warned of her danger by the burning house to flee into the wilderness. When she went back to the place at night everything was destroyed or taken — house, plantation, coffee-crop—all they had. She took refuge with a neighbouring Arab woman, sending her babies to her mother, whilst herself awaiting her husband's return.

"She was weighed down at first by a feeling

that somewhere he endured torture either from disease or man. Then it was shown her in a dream that maimed, broken, now reeling from weakness like a drunken man, now creeping on his belly like a snake, he toiled towards her, and her soul revived. Thenceforward she slept not night nor day. Cordials and arrowroot were at her hand in readiness for the hour of his coming. She watched and waited three whole weeks, only leaving the ashes of what was once her home for scanty refreshment between sunset and moonrise. Had he delayed his exit from the palm-trees but a few seconds, he would have been spared much. She must have found his senseless form within a very little while of his fainting away.

"It was well for him she waited thus. Otherwise he had surely perished. Never had man sweeter angel for wife. May her joy be infinite, here and in a better world.

"And praise be to Allah for His gift of little children! Surely their laughter and their song are His own charms for giving back to a fainting man the youth and buoyancy which else were clean gone from him! He wakes from a doze: the dark-eyed little Iza stands beside his couch with folded hands and grave face till she sees him smile. Then she stoops, presses a kiss upon his lips, and, mindful of a mother's counsel,

steps lightly away. His gladness grows the greater for the swell of joy which rises from sister and brother at Iza's good tidings of father's recovery.

"In a little while he is conscious of another kitten's presence. The stately Victoria has arrived with stealthy step, bent upon confirming with her fawn-like eyes the news her sister has brought. 'Kiss me, my love,' he beseeches. She touches his own with lips of bewitching sweetness, strokes his cheeks lovingly, and then, with all the authority conferred by six years experience of life, goes out to gravely announce that father is nearly better.

"He dozes off for a few minutes. A shy little brown dog trots in to gaze with infinite pity upon his thin, worn face. He opens his eyes and smiles. The little dog finds a British tongue. 'Is 'ou better, fader?' he inquires, then turns longing eyes upon a penknife which father has asked for, thinking to sharpen a pencil, and forgetting a missing arm! 'Give father a kiss, Walter,' he murmurs; 'you can have the knife, but don't cut yourself,' and it is a merry little dog that runs off.

"Pity the poor mute struggling maimed and weary on his homeward way. Pity his moments of bitterest agony when eyes fall on ruined home! After that let pity turn to envy if you

will. That is the one passion there seems room for here!

"I lie in the shade of palm-trees. Running water is in sight from my hammock. Already, after three weeks with wife and bairns, I feel a man again. The dysentery is gone. There is still an occasional painful throbbing where my left arm once was, but only a memory of those horrible burnings and their deep scars remain. Sometimes I fancy I shall get in another day for England before all is done. The goodness of Allah gives me new life and spirit every hour, as my wife truly says; but she fails to explain that if I have the pluck to do anything more, it will be because Allah gives it through herself and our little ones. It is they who fill my heart with happiness to-day.

"I suppose I write because of pride and gladness, for I have no notion when I shall be able to send this letter. Not that it matters. It is a whim I have just now—to tell you what a fortunate fellow I am. It will do me no good for you to know, and you no harm not to know. Still, I wish you could see my family circle. You have a kind heart. My joy seems too much for one. I wish you could share it 'for auld lang syne.' Good-bye."

It was long before that letter was sent. He forgot it when an opportunity for posting came,

then for a while he had matters to think about so important as probably to drive all thoughts of correspondence from his mind. It reached me at last, and a tedious task it was to disentangle its fragments from the fragments of the two others accompanying it.

When it appeared in 'Blackwood' for February 1917, it aroused much attention, as, indeed, it was bound to do. Reviewers of Walter's extraordinary story were as friendly as they were generous. An article in the 'Spectator,' entitled "The Criminal turned Hero," is typical of what was written in other leading British journals:—

"As the Bible justifies particular rejoicing over the recovery of the sheep that went astray, so we may be allowed to find something peculiarly satisfactory in the heroism of the criminal, without seeming to encourage the dangerous doctrine that heroism is only another aspect of a criminal's daring. Mr Holmes, the . . . Police Court Missionary, wrote in 'Blackwood's Magazine' last June about the wonderful courage and endurance of a former English burglar who had settled near Aden and married an Arab wife. This man served as a spy in the Mesopotamian Campaign, entered the Turkish lines, was discovered and was tortured, being burnt about his body and losing an arm, but he afterwards escaped. His letters revealed a simple passion for the land of his birth. It seemed

to him a matter of ordinary routine in the circumstances to do what he could for Britain. His one purpose was to 'put in a bit' or 'get in another day' for England. The fact that he had taken root in Arabia made no difference. The exotic heat of Mocha had done nothing to parch his loving memories of the land whose laws he had once defied, but which he now desired to serve desperately.

"The tenacity of the sense and pride of being British is, of course, nothing new. Literature has many examples of it. We think of the delightful passage in 'Eothen' in which Kinglake describes the character of Osman Effendi in Cairo. Osman was a Scotsman who had been taken prisoner by the Mohammedans when he was a drummer-boy in Fraser's force. Being given the customary choice between death and conversion to Islam, he had no notion of making a profession of Christianity a matter of self-respect and a fearless rebuke to insolence, like the hero of Sir Alfred Lyall's 'Theology in Extremis.' He therefore clung to life, became a respected Mohammedan, and, as though to prove his sincerity, took to himself two wives. Kinglake, after telling this, adds:—

> "'But the strangest feature in Osman's character was his inextinguishable nationality. In vain they had brought him over the seas in early boyhood—in vain he had suffered captivity, conversion, circumcision—in vain they

had passed him through fire in their Arabian campaigns,—they could not cut away or burn out poor Osman's inborn love of all that was Scotch; in vain men called him Effendi — in vain he swept along in Eastern robes—in vain the rival wives adorned his hareem; the joy of his heart still plainly lay in this, that he had three shelves of books, and that the books were thorough-bred Scotch,—the Edinburgh this —the Edinburgh that—and, above all, I recollect he prided himself upon the "Edinburgh Cabinet Library."'

"Readers of Mr Kipling's stories will also remember the engaging gibberish, sung by the children of an Indian hill tribe, which turned out to be a dim memory of the 'Wearin' o' the Green.' The children descended from an Irish soldier. There is nothing surprising in the patriotism, as such, of Mr Holmes' hero. The thing that is surprising is what he was willing to endure for it in his obscure way. Surprising also, as well as beautiful, is the man's intense devotion to his Arab wife and their children. He found with her, not the makeshift home of a 'poor white,' or the domestic bitterness experienced by the French Colonial soldier who took an Arab wife in Maupassant's story, but a paradise of happiness.

"In the February number of 'Blackwood's Magazine' Mr Holmes tells us more of Walter Greenway's

adventures. They are so strange, and are recorded in the man's letters with what seems to be so much fancifulness and conscious artistry, that one is at first inclined to doubt their genuineness. Would a man who had disappeared into Arabia and taken up with native modes of life in that backward and generally far from agreeable land, really write in a manner that suggests the mind of Burton, tinged with the learned playfulness of 'The Arabian Nights'? But the story *is* true. The corroboration supplied by Mr Holmes is all of the undesigned and therefore most powerful sort. Greenway's letters reached Mr Holmes in pellets distributed among botanical specimens and had to be pieced together with enormous labour. Greenway writes of himself frequently in the third person, as though he were an unconcerned spectator of his own deeds. He writes of 'that Bedouin mute,' for it was as an Arab pretending to be deaf and dumb that he penetrated the Turkish lines. He describes his return to his home after his escape:—

> "'That Bedouin mute I told you about—he *had* a job to get home . . . .'"

Having quoted the two first paragraphs of Walter's description of how he got back, and summarising what follows, the reviewer proceeds to give, again in the narrator's own words, the passages describing the children's visit to their father's couch.

"There is a touch of Byron's lyrical delight in the sensations of life in all this," is the reviewer's comment; then he passes on to deal very sympathetically with letters which will appear later.

To one so interested in Greenway as myself such appreciation of his remarkable story was peculiarly gratifying. If I felt it hardly charitable to set him down as an ordinary burglar at any period of his career, I had only myself to thank for his being so set down. It will be remembered that he came to me an entire stranger. He remained much the same when I wrote the sketch containing his earlier letters. It was not till those earlier letters appeared in print for Major Mills to read, that I had the beginnings of the clearer light I have now. Such new light as I had when I wrote the later sketch I neglected to make use of, my idea being to use few words of my own, so that Greenway might have greater freedom to speak for himself.

I agree with the reviewer when he calls it a dangerous doctrine that heroism is only another aspect of a criminal's daring. I have dealt with hundreds of confirmed criminals in my time. I have found only a very few at all comparable with Greenway in daring or lovableness. These few were, every one, criminal by accident rather than purpose. All were capable of better things. Had they come to themselves earlier they had

never written their names on the sordid records of crime.

How Greenway became a burglar has been told. He blundered into crime, mistaking crime for play, and suffering disproportionate punishment. "But why did he keep on?" I am asked on every hand. "His old employer was anxious to have him back. Why didn't he take the chance of returning to an honest way of living when he had it, if he were really the misunderstood person you make out he was?" So my friends talk to me. There is common-sense in what they say, and I can only conjecture the reasons operating to cause him to continue nearly four years in a way of living altogether regrettable and wrong.

I think, as has been said, he brooded, during his first imprisonment, over the rankling injustice of being condemned as a burglar, forgetting that ordinary mortals do not act as he acted, and that, however wooden, the decision of the Bench which condemned him was the natural result of a process of reasoning which assumes all who adopt unconventional methods of gaining access to other people's houses to be under grave suspicion as regards honesty of intention. He only saw clearly that he had not the least idea of doing wrong, and he had no patience with any who could believe him capable of it.

If his friend Mills, or Mills' father, or even his

own father, had thought of it, no doubt one or other of them would have been waiting there when he emerged from the prison gate. Probably he expected nothing less, not understanding their absence to be owing to the expectation that letters lying long unopened in the office of the governor of the prison would explain their attitude towards him. To my mind it is certain he expected some one to at least take the trouble to grasp his hand and speak a few words of sympathy in welcoming him back to liberty.

When the letters were given him in a cold, formal way, and he realised he was asked not to go home, his peculiarly sensitive nature was wounded at the quick. Since he could not go home, he would go to no place where he was known. So he wandered to a town a hundred miles off, growing daily to imagine more strongly that all eyes were upon him, and every man's hand against him for what he was misjudged to be. At last, perhaps out of sheer mischief once more, but probably out of a desperate resolve to seem what he imagined he was thought, he was found again to have entered a dwelling by an attic window, arrested, and placed in custody. There being a previous similar conviction recorded against him, it was now entirely his own fault that he received a further sentence of imprisonment. I do not see how his father's presence on

this occasion could by any chance help him. The fact that money was sent before to enable him to make a new start, and that the father was still willing to do what he could to raise him out of the slough into which he had sunk, would cause him to appear all the worse in the eyes of the Judge who heard the case, for this time he went to a higher Court. I see no reason to question anybody's judgment here except that of Greenway himself. But the same period of detention at hard labour ordered now as was ordered at his first conviction, only brings into stronger relief the undue severity of his treatment at the previous trial. That three months' imprisonment was held sufficient in a precisely similar set of circumstances, but when the offender had already a conviction recorded against him, is striking proof how to a trained mind the earlier sentence was wrong. Of course it was wrong. The first case was essentially one for remand, careful inquiry on the off-chance that a strange explanation would turn out satisfactory, release in the event of that unlikely happening, and binding over in substantial recognisances should the odd defence not be made out. Such is the usual course of procedure in almost every English Court nowadays when a first offender is of previous good character.

The person most unused to criminal courts will easily appreciate how no great harm can be done

by erring on the side of leniency with a first offender who has hitherto borne an irreproachable character. If he be a consummate hypocrite upon whom leniency is wasted, it will not be long before he offends again; then due weight can be given to the fact, and his duplicity and wickedness suitably rewarded. On the other hand, to give no consideration to a man's admirable record until five-and-twenty; to take it quite for granted that by blundering into crime, or what looks like crime, he proves himself a person for whom there is no other course save imprisonment, is to risk doing infinitely more harm than such unreasoning severity can possibly do good in any conceivable case. With a person of Greenway's temperament such drastic treatment may well be disastrous.

The second imprisonment, which admittedly he brought upon himself by foolishly taking a course he well knew to be criminal, would leave him harder to help than ever. What was at first eminently desirable if he were to be put right was now absolutely necessary. Some one, whether friend knowing his peculiarities or stranger skilled in handling difficult types of character, must give him special care. He does not appear to have met such fortune. It would seem that, immersed in their busy life, the Mills trusted too much to letters; and his father, greatly worried at home, sent him more money as the best means of helping

him. What was wanted was that somebody should meet him with a warm grasp of the hand, a sympathetic explanation of his mother's distressing condition, and an earnest appeal to make a new start in some suitable work already provided where he was not known.

As no one who knew his strange nature greeted him on release, so no one was provided with sufficient intelligence or energy to see what was required for him, and to make his return to right ways easy. The usual stereotyped prison procedure having been gone through, with the customary liberty to apply for help on discharge, so long as it appeared that his father would provide money to enable him to make another start, so long nothing was held necessary for others to do in his case. When his father tired of helping him, he was given over by all as a failure.

I have been at pains to make inquiries, and it is my conclusion that until I myself urged him to come back to me after his tenth term of imprisonment, no carefully thought-out plan had been put into operation by anybody with a view towards his reclamation. One or two absolutely unsuitable offers of work were made him in the course of the four years his dabblings in crime were spread over. Those who made the offers were able to feel they had done something, though they might as well have done nothing. Well-meaning men, like the

prison chaplain he mentioned, wrote to his father on several occasions, but nothing practical ever came of it.

All the while he was as a ship adrift with nobody at the helm to set its course. And the pity of it! For he was a singularly easy fellow to help from the start. It was clear there was room for him at sea; equally clear he was likely to do nothing but good there; the moment he offered the solution I recognised its value. Even had he never met the Arab wife destined to so inestimably bless his life, I do not believe he would have strayed again out of the right track.

No charge recorded against him goes further than to allege how he "did feloniously break and enter certain premises *with intent* to steal."[1] There is no record that he actually *did* steal—only suspicion that such was his object. My theory is that the first imprisonment acted disastrously upon a peculiarly constructed mind. He would seem to have deliberately sought the further terms of detention he served, and in a fashion which appealed to his sense of humour. I think he took that strange course whensoever he had no money,

[1] In English law a charge of felony will lie where a housebreaker so much as displaces valuables in the premises he enters. It is not necessary for him to actually remove them. Merely tampering with property under such conditions is, very sensibly, held as theft. Had Greenway done more than simply break and enter he would certainly have been indicted on the fuller charge.

and he was weary of a futile search for employment, naturally unobtainable since he had cut himself away from those who alone could have helped him—character gone—into the skilled work he was trained to do.

There is my conjecture for what it is worth. I only put it forward to explain my refusal, in the fuller light I now have, to consider he was a criminal in the sense I understand the word—an abandoned, wicked person. I am quite sure he was never that.

But I yield to none in admiration for the devoted wife he found, nor do I for a moment seek to lessen by one jot the tribute due to her for making of him the hero he proved capable of becoming. I have seen many times the tremendous power of a good woman's love; yet in sober truth, after carefully weighing achievements nearly as remarkable wrought by others, the palm goes to a figure waiting patiently beside her ruined Arabian home to greet the husband her oriental wisdom foresaw returning, tortured even unto the death which must have found him but for her unwearying care.

V.

WALTER GREENWAY, MUTE AGAIN.

News that I had further letters from his old schoolfellow reaching Major Mills on the eve of his departure for another period of service abroad, he spared time to come to my place and examine fragments so far as I had then got them pieced together. As a matter of fact only the first letter was complete at the time, but it was enough to send him into raptures.

"Didn't I tell you that woman had brains?" was his comment as he read Walter's glowing tribute to his wife's devotion. "I said she'd more than a pretty face: see how she impressed those children with the importance of keeping their father quiet! Poor devil, he'd gone through something; you can tell he'd a close shave. Let me have a copy of this correspondence when you've finished sorting it out. You must have the patience of Job to make this patchwork stuff up; it never would get put together if it depended on me. Whatever made the fellow tear it up, I wonder! Is it another of his variety tricks?"

"I think not," I replied; "I haven't come across any explanation he gives so far, but either he wanted to dodge the censor, or else he was afraid of what he wrote getting into the hands of the Turks: that's my conclusion."

"I daresay you're right," the Major agreed; "there isn't a great deal of point about this trick as a joke, and Walter mostly had points when he played tricks on anybody. Here, let me read this letter again—the one you've pasted together,—I can't make anything of these you're messing about with now."

He read it through once more, blundering where rents so destroyed words as to make their identity uncertain, and wishing fervently that Walter had seen fit to send the sheets along whole. I have a suspicion that the strong language he used ostensibly to condemn his friend's destructive talents was really brought forth to hide the emotion he felt as he read of Walter's family, in a familiar handwriting which he declared hadn't changed a bit. Be that as it may, his eyes were wet, and his voice was husky, when he remarked as he put the letter down—

"I never read anything like it in my life. Hanged if I don't feel proud to have ever known the fellow. See how he pictures everything,—that getting home —that grand wife of his nursing him back to life— those poor little things stealing in to see how he is getting on,—the fellow's a poet, man! He makes you fairly see all he's writing about. Why, he'd

move the heart of a German politician, writing the way he does. You must let me have a copy the moment you get these letters printed. I shall never rest till I've seen what's in the others you're struggling with; but I can't stay till you've got them arranged. If you're through in a month you'll be lucky. Well, don't forget me, mind: good-bye."

I suppose I was lucky, for I had the two letters I laboured on when he left disentangled and arranged in the order in which they were written considerably before the Major's month expired. The one next in order of date was in a rather firmer hand than he wrote when recovering from his illness, being written on the 20th April 1916. The miracle of restoration to health and strength which he attributes to his wife and children is plainly evident in every line he writes:—

> "My Bedouin mute is himself again, thanks be to Allah. Like me in looks, and circumstanced like me, he gives signs of learning all my old tricks. He was at Aden yesterday. His wife and children were throng in a bazaar. I noticed his eyes fixed affectionately on a fall-pipe attached to a particularly tall building. He walked up to it. His hand darted out. In a moment he had dragged his feet a yard off the ground. Then he cast a mournful glance at his left side where the missing arm once was. He looked like giving up the job. But the terrified

mewing of a too venturesome kitten, whom ambition had landed on a height so dizzy as to temporarily turn her brain, encouraged him upward on an errand of rescue. Spite of missing left arm, he scaled that fall-pipe in forty seconds by the clock. Laying hold on pussy, he placed her in his bosom, bringing her safely to the ground.

"Quite a crowd, mostly Arab, but with a sprinkling of white folk, had gathered to witness the performance. He noticed four especially, whose blanched faces had followed his every movement with breathless interest—his wife and children, called out of the bazaar by the magnetism of a crowd. But if he had eyes for only them, he had ears for others. I think you know that my mute is not really deaf. He had heard the German tongue spoken. He thought it musical, or something. Sometimes excitement lends new tones to men's voices; and two white men, whom the Arabs thought to be British, spoke in the German tongue of the folly of risking life to save a cat —spoke so uncharitably of my mute's intellect that it hurt him.

"Yet, entranced by some quality of their speech, he signed to wife and children to complete purchases in the bazaar, interrupted by his climbing performance, himself hurrying

after those Britons whose speech was German when they grew excited. They went to an unfrequented lane in earnest conversation, walking slowly. He passed them near a warehouse, in front of which he halted, for it was noonday.

"A devout believer, he spread his mat and began his devotions. Those Huns coming up, found him in their path and kicked him, defiling his mat with infidel feet. He heeded not their insults, so ignoring his presence they talked in German of many things not understood by guileless children of the desert.

"They went their way. He marked that way. Perhaps his heart burned to avenge the insult Kultur had offered his Faith. At dead of night he was back at that spot. They had spoken of clocks which Arabs were to be hired to put aboard British vessels—amongst the coal He reached an upper window as easily as he had reached that kitten. The darkness troubled him not at all.

"It was a ticklish job he had to do inside. When he had descended to the basement, seeking clocks and finding none, through several floors, he all but stumbled into an apartment occupied by the very infidel pair he was interested in. He held his breath and crept back into the shadows to listen to a tale concerning a great arsenal the Turks had filled with

German munitions near Baghdad. They used the language of Kultur, it seemed, when together alone and not excited. It was evident they were German officers serving the Fatherland disguised as traders.

"One told of orders he had for the Turkish commander of that arsenal at Baghdad, whither he was proceeding after distributing his store of clocks among British shipping, as had been arranged in earlier conversation. He seemed proud of his rank, and showed a gaudy uniform, at sight of which my mute's eyes shone again. The officer being a small man for a German, it struck my mute that the uniform was his own fit. He is a determined person, also very vain, and fond of fine clothes. That uniform was as good as his. His eyes followed it when its German owner placed it back in a tin box and put it into a cupboard. He had already seen a case of clocks near by, and decided to save British lives. It only remained for the Huns to depart without seeing him, which they did presently, though they came so close to him as they went, and chanced to stand so long conversing, that his forehead was dripping with perspiration, so imminent and unavoidable appeared his discovery.

"It was a heavy case of boxes of clocks—so heavy that he could not move it alone, and it

took him an hour to open it with poor tools and one arm. Then he undid the warehouse door by means of a curious use he learnt to put a knife to, making it quite a good key, and carried the boxes, one by one, carefully outside, for fear of accidents, returning last of all for the uniform, which he bore tenderly away. In half an hour he was back with four Arab boatmen of his father-in-law's tribe, who carried the goods to a trading vessel lying in the harbour.

"As for me, I rejoiced when I knew all the tale. It told me that my Bedouin brother had quite got over that sickness which threatened to be his death. The devotion of wife and children had worked the miracle within four weeks of his sad home-coming. I cannot tell you how thankful I felt.

"I longed to imitate his airy journey next morning, as I looked upon the scene at break of day, viewing that warehouse from the quiet lane. There was no kitten aloft, but a fascinating little window, which positively beckoned me. If it were only dark! Then I might live again one more thrilling hour of my old life. It was not dark. It was glorious sunrise. Moreover, my wife was there. She tugged at my outlandish dress (as those who knew me years ago would designate my Arab costume), seeking to lead me from temptation. She had

no notion of allowing me to repeat the Bedouin's performance, of which she had seen more than enough. She is a good wife, but unenterprising. Like an English policeman, she is unreasonably opposed to the exercise of talent by men of lofty ambition; also, like those clowns in your own police-cells, but who are not half as quick-witted, she has ways of overcoming one so simple as me. Being docile, I yielded.

"Yet it was good to hear my boy talking of my brother's performance—wish he could 'climb up a high wall like dat.' He inherits some of his father's devilment. I suppose it is natural for me to love him all the more on that account.

"My wife's father panted to be gone. One last look, and all buildings high enough to be attractive vanished from my vision. We are on a trading voyage. In less than a month we hope to reach Basra, the place into which my Bedouin crawled half-dead eight weeks ago.

"I have reasons for wishing to reach that spot. I owe something to the men who fired my brother's home. They told lies about what he did to their detriment. They said he did his spying because he is a recreant follower of the Prophet. I knew, and you knew, it was because he is a loyal subject of King George. They said he got kind treatment from them and abused their charity. I say nothing of the

tests they put him through. They were rough, but all in the game, and fair as things go. But they had no business to burn his place. I resent that. They had done enough before to settle any debt he could possibly owe them. I can walk straight to those responsible for so miserably overdoing the vengeance business, and I shall one day. I have information, and I shall use it. Turks are liars by nature, but they shall pay for lies told about my brother, also for needless cruelties done to his family.

"There is another job to be tackled first, though. I like a bit of sport, and feel game for anything now. I am going right into the jaws of the enemy. If I win, I will tell you. If I lose, I fear I shall not be able.

"I am writing now, on the off-chance of getting this letter posted with one I wrote earlier, forgotten when in Aden. I am alone for a moment, dreaming of Britain, and chafing to be doing something for my country. Allah would seem to be giving me one more chance. News of that arsenal up the Tigris has sent me off again. I hope a little plan I have made will work, sir. Good-night."

Before this letter was printed I received one from Captain James Smith, the skipper who gave Walter his first berth at sea. In many interviews and much correspondence since the rascal disappeared, I do

not recollect Greenway's name being so much as mentioned after the captain spoke so favourably of him in telling me how he deserted ship. Meanwhile he had given many lads or men I was interested in just such a chance as Walter had, most of them rewarding his kindness well. Some being mentioned in 'My Police Court Friends with the Colours,' I sent the skipper a copy of that volume as soon as published, in October 1915, that he might see chronicled certain doings of his protégés and my own. The book had been at his lodging fourteen months when he put into Cardiff to claim it, and to write a letter first thanking me for my gift, and then proceeding:—

> "That reminds me. I saw Black Walt[1] last April. You remember him. He deserted ship at Colombo after a year's good service. That was in the summer of 1908, and I saw him again for the first time when we ran alongside an Arab dhow clearing out of Aden, in April, as I have said. He was on deck, messing about with a ramshackle old motor-boat, which he was trying to tinker up. I should never have known him, but he hailed me in his old style.
>
> "I asked him what game he was up to in the Bedouin dress he was wearing. 'Oh,' he said 'I've settled here; I'm one of the family.'

[1] The name he was given on the *Swan*.

'And what's happened to your arm?' I said, seeing his left sleeve empty. 'Ask the Turks,' says he, laughing; 'it came off through trying to do a bit for England.' 'How?' I asked. 'Never mind how,' said he. 'And where are you off to now?' I said. 'Basra,' says he, 'trading.' 'Trading what?' I said. 'Mechanical toys and officers' uniforms and liquors and what not,' says he. 'I daresay,' I said, 'them's likely goods for Basra.' 'They're all right,' he says; 'my little cargo's wanted up that way very bad;' and he gave me a wink with those merry eyes of his, all full of devilment, and went off on the dhow.

"I wonder what he's been after all this time, and how he lost that arm, and what he'd got up his sleeve when I met him? He was always a funny joker. I'll bet anything he's a rum tale to tell."

Written as it was in complete ignorance of what I had told concerning Walter's recent movements, the skipper's letter provided strong accidental corroboration of his amazing tale of purloined clocks and a proposed dangerous mission up the Tigris. Certainly the fellow was in Aden at the time he mentioned in the letter. What he described to the captain as his "little cargo" of "mechanical toys and officers' uniforms and what not" was undoubtedly largely composed of plunder from the

warehouse his Bedouin brother robbed. Basra was to be his starting-point, apparently, for the arsenal concerning which he had made "a little plan." I must wait till I saw Captain Smith personally before getting much further, and, as he was by this time on another voyage, the wait looked like being long.

I reckoned without the Huns, who brought that voyage to a disastrous end, torpedoing the schooner in February 1917. Survivors of the crew were tossed on tempestuous seas a whole fortnight, living somehow through the wildest and coldest weather the skipper remembered in a long life at sea, the open boat they occupied being sighted at last by a tramp steamer which promptly rescued them.

It makes the blood boil only to read of the diabolical inhumanity the Huns are capable of at sea; to hear it described by a survivor of their cruelty is maddening, particularly so when that survivor chances to be a close friend. Captain Smith is not the man to bear malice for nothing. If he nurses now a bitter and passionate hatred foreign to the heart of a seaman, it is because he cannot forget the agony in which three of his men died, dismembered by shell fire, in another open boat sunk by the German barbarians after the crew had left the doomed, because defenceless, ship, two of those three having sailed with him since he took them off my hands in their boyhood.

The skipper had not called to arouse my sympathy. His tale came out rather by accident. There was no explaining the cause of that pale, emaciated face and that wasted frame otherwise. He came primarily to chat about Walter. It was the 1st of June 1917.

"They look after you well, once you get ashore," he informed me, speaking of kind treatment given him in hospital; "there's a wonderful lot of books of one sort or another, and I've been reading what you wrote about Black Walt; it looked funny to see that letter of mine in print at the end—I've never been in print before, that I know of.

"But what I've been thinking, off and on, ever since I wrote you that letter, is what a fool I've been for nearly eight years. As soon as Black Walt had gone on the dhow I began to wonder where I'd seen somebody like him many a time since he slipped away at Colombo. It didn't strike me for a long while that it *was* him I'd seen, not somebody like him.

"Then I tumbled to it all in a moment. Over and over again when we were in Arabian waters, an Arab chief, a grand old fellow, very like a prince to look at, and fond of the British, would come aboard with his son-in-law. He liked a chat with us, and his son-in-law, being good at our language, did the interpreting.

"Bless my soul, Jim," I said to one of the poor

fellows the Huns murdered last voyage, "did you notice the fellow who spoke to me—on the Arab dhow at Aden?"

"'Yes, sir,' he says, 'Black Walt.'

"'And where did you see him last, before then? I said.

"'At Colombo, when he went off to desert, about eight years since, sir,' he says.

"'Why, you're as big a fool as me, Jim,' I said. 'Don't you remember the old Arab prince who's come aboard so often with that son-in-law of his? Now, who's the son-in-law?'

"'Not Black Walt, sir, surely?' he says.

"'The identical potato, Jim lad, and don't forget it. He's fooled the lot of us. Haven't we talked to him by the hour, admiring him for the way he understood us, and never dreaming what fun he was getting out of us, shoving in an Arab word here and there to fool us the better, so as we'd think him nothing else than the native sailor he passed himself off to be! That Bedouin cloak he wore when he hailed me that time last April (1916) threw me off the scent a bit, but I knew I'd seen the beggar somewhere many a time since he gave us the slip at Colombo. I've been trying all this while to reckon him up, and I've got him now. No wonder the beggar made us admire his English! We weren't half fools, Jim, not one of the whole lot of us able to see through his trick! Well, he's

had a laugh or two out of us—there's no doubt about that. And I can understand now what made the old Arab prince so merry every time they went off, and we saw them laughing and talking together—can't you remember, Jim?'

"Jim remembered all right. He was flabbergasted, and went to talk to the other chaps. In a while he came back.

"'We've got a bit further, Captain,' he says; 'it looks as if Black Walt was on this ship within a couple of hours of deserting it, but dressed like an Arab. Harry remembers the mate setting him on to unload.'

"'Tell the mate to come here,' I said.

"'Now, Mr Jones, what do you think of this tale?' I said, and I told him what I'd found out; then I asked him if he remembered setting anybody on, like Black Walt looked, in an Arab sailor's dress when we were unloading at Colombo, the time he deserted.

"At first he didn't remember, so I recommended him to have a word or two with Harry. He came back then and said, 'I believe you're right, sir. I have a sort of idea one of the men I set on was the besom you're talking about. I remember a fellow going about his work as if he'd burst with laughing sometimes, and at other times looking as if he'd like to murder somebody, but I only thought him one of the rum customers we keep turning

up among foreigners everywhere. Now I come to think of it, I was surprised at the fellow going off without any pay for what he did, and I shouldn't wonder if Harry's right. Black Walt disguised himself in Arab dress, came and did a few hours' unloading, saw we none of us recognised him, nearly split his sides with laughing, then went off before he gave the show away.'

"'And have you seen the fellow any time since —barring that morning at Aden last April?' I asked.

"'No, sir, I think not,' he said.

"'Think again,' I said.

"'No, sir, I don't remember him anywhere else,' he says.

"'What about the old Arab prince's son-in-law, Mr Jones?' I asked.

"You should have seen him! 'No,' he says, 'it can't be him! Well, this does take the biscuit. It *is* him. And we were taken in every time, every man-Jack of us. I never saw anything like it in my life!'

"Of course everybody on the ship had seen the old Arab prince's son-in-law, who'd had a word or two with most of 'em. Harry says—

"'Fancy me telling the beggar how kids are taught their schooling in England, because he seemed to want to know, and how women bake bread, and what sort of houses folks live in, and

him listening as solemn as a judge, as if he was ever so interested!'

"'What price me?' another fellow weighed in; 'he asked me all manner of questions about women's dresses, and whether they like coloured silk things in England; and I told him ever such a lot about how nice they look in silk blouses—never thinking he was the beggar what dressed a monkey up once in a piece of silk I'd bought in India, knowing I'd got it for a girl!'

"Every one of 'em, down to the last boy you sent me, had been taken in. He'd yarned with the lot, and not one of 'em but what had made his picture of England, and everything British, a bit more favourable than was absolutely true to life, though they had to be careful about drawing the long-bow; they could see he was too sharp to believe anything they liked to tell him, was that young Arab.

"I must tell them his story, such as are left as soon as I see 'em again. There isn't the least bit of doubt he's done all he claims. An actor like him would deceive the Devil. I was always fond of him. You know that. I could see he'd brains enough to get on anywhere, and pluck enough to pull him through any danger.

"That Arab father-in-law of his is no fool either, I can tell you. He's been mixed up with Black Walt's bit of service for England — more

than Walt tells. You can easily see why Walt makes no more of it. It doesn't do in those countries to prate too much about what you've done. If you happen to have killed somebody's twentieth cousin, no matter how fair the fight, you're likely enough to be killed yourself. If you've sense you leave the neighbourhood till things blow over. It won't be either because the old prince did nothing, or because his son-in-law was afraid of giving him his due; it will be because it wasn't policy to let too much come out."

It was intensely interesting to hear the Arab sheikh so highly spoken of, but I felt still more anxious for news of Walter's wife. Unfortunately the skipper had never seen her—knew no more of her existence, in fact, than that, Walter being her father's son-in-law, she must be Walter's wife, and what her husband told of her in his printed letters. Captain Smith was very confident about her, however.

"You can depend she's first-rate," he told me. "When you know the sire you can form an idea what the child will be like. I only wish every English lass had as good a father. I tell you he's a gentleman—a prince; he never strikes you as anything else. He might have walked right out of the Old Testament—one of the very best of the patriarchs, I mean—honest as the day and generous as a child."

"You spoke of a motor-boat in your letter," I said; "Walter speaks of one too. Did it strike you as good enough for a journey up the Tigris to Baghdad?"

"You can never tell what any ramshackle old thing can be got to do at a push," the skipper answered. "Besides, what Walt doesn't know about any sort of machinery isn't worth knowing. Oh yes, he made the journey safe enough—why not?"

"No reason at all why not, that I know of," I said; "only it seems odd to picture anything quite so incongruous as a Bedouin in a modern motor-boat, and, but for your letter, it might have seemed incredible when I read of it. He speaks of his father-in-law buying it from a British officer, you remember. I was a little puzzled to know how he'd repair it up, after your description. You see, I knew nothing about his being a skilled mechanic."

"We found him very useful while he was on the ship; nothing stuck him fast. That's all I know," Captain Smith concluded; "and I don't think he'd be very much bothered to get the motor-boat in going order. He's been a champion. If I get another ship I'll keep a sharp look-out for his father-in-law, and see if I can't learn something about that little wife of his as well."

VI.

WALTER GREENWAY, HERO.

MILLIONS of parcels have been sent by affectionate friends in the homeland to the men who have fought for Britain—all offered whole-heartedly, all giving greater pleasure in the sending than in the receiving, highly as the recipients prized the thought and care bestowed. I do not say that news concerning the reception given a small parcel already referred to aroused greater satisfaction than has been afforded by news of the pleasure enjoyed by receivers of many another. No doubt all whose fortune it is to realise how very keen is the joy created by their offerings in places far away, or full of danger and privation, feel what my wife and her friends felt — how small and poor are gifts made much of, how gladly would their value have been multiplied manifold could it have been foreseen how highly the things sent would be appreciated.

The fragments making up the last letter of the three enclosed in my package of "botanical speci-

mens" having been pieced together, it was found what Walter Greenway thought of the kindness of Englishwomen he never saw, when, on August 6, 1916, he pencilled this:—

"I am writing under difficulties. To-day at noon a messenger brought a parcel sent all the way from England. What gladness! Wife and children left work to see it opened. The string was strong, and my knife a poor thing. My hand trembled. It took quite a while to get the parcel undone. Tell your wife and the other kind ladies they little dreamt what joy they were giving when they filled that parcel.

"The two little ladies (dolls) who came with a message of love 'to the daughters of a British hero'—a scamp like me a hero: fancy that! —I cannot picture the welcome my little girls are giving them. They never saw any dolls before. How they hug them and kiss them, stroking their dark-brown hair, and going into ecstasies over fair white faces, beautiful eyes, heads that will turn, and arms and legs that will move! The picture-book—just the thing for a boy,—and the four-bladed knife, which will be just the thing also when father has blunted the blades a bit[1]—Walter is silent for

[1] Not exactly; it was meant for father himself, the boy being apparently not more than two years old then.

once: rapture has stricken him dumb. He can but gaze at his treasures in wonderment. The beautiful scarf and jacket and apron, the handsome bead necklaces, the lovely cambric handkerchiefs—all so tastefully arranged in that charming little basket, and all made priceless by the fact that Englishwomen do not disdain to send expressions and tokens of love to my darling wife, whose heroism is of a far higher order than that of her husband, miscalled a hero—I thank the senders from the bottom of my heart. The chocolates, too, and other sweetmeats, will give gladness here for many a day.

"Then 'Maga,' as my father used to call it, came with the parcel also, though I see it was posted two months later. I have read what you say of my Bedouin mute. He didn't do badly, poor beggar. And you are to be congratulated, sir, on your patience in putting the scraps together. I had to tear the letters up. I have only a poor opinion of some of the messengers one has to use here. They will pry into things which are no business of theirs, and some of them have knowledge surprising in simple, ignorant Arabs. Sometimes they talk about what they see when they shouldn't meddle. I have only one arm left now. I am ridiculously anxious to keep that.

"The covers of 'Blackwood' bring far-away days back. I close my eyes: I am at home again—a youth of eighteen, fresh from school, the idol of the best of fathers, the dearest of mothers, and the gentlest of sisters. I have done well at school. Everybody is overjoyed. I am being given a start I am proud of in the office of an important company. My new life begins on the Monday following; that Saturday night I see again as it were yesterday.

"It is winter. A big fire glows in the old-fashioned grate. What a cosy room it is, to be sure! Victoria, my only sister, sits at the table beside me. She is making bandages for use in some medical mission hospital. I dive in the hamper at her feet, and take out three or four pretty little dolls, tastefully dressed to give pleasure to infant patients. Mother sits in the chimney-corner knitting scarves, also for the mission-field. Opposite her, reading 'Blackwood,' is my father, silent and happy.

"'We'll have such lovely walks when you're home for week-ends, Walter,' my sister whispers. 'Now that Christmas is over, the primroses will soon be here.'

"I know what she is thinking of, and I know she'll gather no more primroses. My

heart aches and my throat chokes. I cannot answer her. She knows she is not strong. They told her that, very kindly, when they said that the Master had need of her work, done at home. It would only spoil her usefulness to send her to a distant land with a climate she could not stand. She has no notion of consumption; but that is what it is.

"Her distressing cough seizes her, making her forget to notice that I can't talk about primroses. I see my father lay 'Maga' on his knee and look gravely into her face, while mother pretends not to be alarmed, going on with her knitting steadily. Ah! before those primroses come again she lies beneath. I see them now as I planted them, blooming over and making sweet her resting-place.

"Perhaps it is because I am nearly come to the hour when, hand in hand, we shall walk once more in green fields bathed in sunshine and rich with flowers, that I think of my sister again; perhaps it is little Victoria's cough—her aunt's cough; perhaps the dolls; perhaps 'Maga.' I am growing melancholy. Strange, I must shake myself. I ought to be proud and glad; for I have another tale to tell of my Bedouin brother. But I am too weary to tell it to-day.

August 7.

"Now I feel a bit more myself, I will tell you of my Bedouin. He left his family at the mouth of Shat-el-Arab, going up to Basra in a boat his father-in-law (an Arab with an English heart) purchased from a British officer two months before war broke out. His idea was to test the possibility of firing that enemy munition store near Baghdad. Fortunately the uniform he procured at Aden contained in a pocket a map with the place well marked on it. If he could destroy that arsenal, what glorious revenge for all his troubles!

"His objective lay three hundred miles up the Tigris. If the motor worked all right he would do the journey easily. He knew something of obstacles placed in the river from the conversation of the German officers, and more before certain Arabs pocketed rewards. But that ignorance of mechanics you would expect in a Bedouin got on his nerves. If that motor broke down he was done. How could he propel himself up the river in his maimed state if the engine went wrong?

"As things turned out, the motor, London made, and sound as a bell — its owner must have sold it for the old song he did because tired of a toy,—worked beautifully. It was

something over which he had no control which caused the trouble. Like the patriarch Jacob, he cried, 'In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.' He dared not approach the shore. A target for every fool with a gun, while he himself found plenty to do, shooting his craft past obstacles in the river, he darted on, or hid behind friendly shelter as occasion served, till, faint and shivering with cold, the welcome sun, rising on the seventh morning from Basra, revealed the bunches of date-palms and the minarets and domes of Baghdad.

"He had gone too far, but there was no sense in turning back. Steering for a palm grove by the water-side, he made fast his boat, then roused the sleepers in a hut close at hand.

"No longer mute, he bade them obey the powerful but disguised German officer confronting them, showing the uniform under his cloak and pointing to his, to their eyes, strange and wonderful craft. They unquestioningly accepted his claims, hurrying to provide bearers for the stuff he had brought. Lying serenely in more senses than one, he was conveyed with his goods inside the very gates of the arsenal he sought, some miles lower down the river.

"Marching to the Turkish colonel in charge,

he was received with true oriental courtesy, but little real favour. A few German junior officers who hung about enabled him to demonstrate his importance. They were suspicious at first. It was fortunate he remembered German tastes and had brought strong drink with him. By nightfall he was master there. None, he knew, would dare to disobey certain directions he gave for the safe-keeping of his additions to the stores. He was not disappointed when he paid a visit of inspection at eight o'clock. [[1]The [day] had passed pleasantly. His clocks were wound up and going beautifully, and the guard slept off their liquor. He betook himself to Baghdad for an hour or two, as he said, on urgent business.

"About [midnight] the arsenal blew up with a tremendous roar which shook the earth, whilst [flames] ascended hundreds of yards to [illuminate] an [inky] sky. He heard and felt and saw from his boat as he tore down the river. 'Alas,' he murmured, 'alas for the faithful who trusted a German!' Surely there be few of them left. Those clocks worked well.]

[1] This part of the pencilled writing is badly rubbed. The single words in brackets are guesses, those they replace being entirely illegible. As it is explained later, I now know these guesses to be wrong. They are retained here to avoid confusion, having been printed elsewhere. Other, probably more correct, guesses are made on pages 142 and 143.

"Rejoining his family at Basra, and finding his father-in-law's business done in that region, he agreed to accompany them back to Mocha, where, indeed, he longed to be. By the last week in July he was ready for work again.

"He pledged a band of Arabs, friends of his father-in-law, by inviolable oaths to follow him to the death, on the one condition that all plunder taken from those marauding Turks who had destroyed his home should be theirs alone. They came up with the enemy in the night of the 30th-31st July. The hirelings earned their wages to the full. They led off seventy captured horses laden with booty as the day broke. The Turks who did him injury were no more. Moreover, divers plans they had been instructed in by the Huns perished with them.

"He was back at Mocha by nightfall of the 2nd August, rejoining his family, happy save for the accursed dysentery which returned with redoubled severity. Nothing stays it. I write feeling that his recovery is doubtful indeed.

"Well, I have nothing to grumble at. I have had my innings. Would to God I had health and strength for sake of wife and bairns. Still, her father is good, and she is an angel. If I must go, she will be both father and mother to our children, till all rejoin me in

a world where, I believe, those who are kind and loving, loyal and true, in whose heart is set the mark of the spirit of a merciful and forgiving God, must surely meet in peace and bliss. From the silence of that mysterious world to come I think I hear whispering voices long still, as once they sounded within walls where 'Maga's' pages were read, dolls dressed, bandages made, and scarves knitted—and they seem to whisper as men whisper when a soul is passing.

"It is a solemn feeling I have. None are far away. Time is nothing and distance nothing. You are thousands of miles away, but I see and hear you clearly. I have not been what I might. Also, I have been misunderstood somewhat. There is One I do not fear to meet now—once I did; but that is past —'For His mercy endureth for ever.' What seemed senseless reiteration once, in that psalm of many verses all ending with those words, is blessed reiteration to-night.

August 8.

"Weaker, but not a bit anxious. How many millions have felt as I feel, looking death in the face! The deaf mute in the Turkish trenches, also the German officer in the arsenal at Baghdad, felt as I feel now. I suppose it

is common for men to face death calmly, only we do not realise that till he approaches. If wife and children could accompany me I should be perfectly happy. Yet it comes to me that I need not fear for them. I hope you will get what I am writing—in great weariness,—I fainted last night as I wrote. It is pleasant to talk, as it were, to a friend who feels as I do of dear old England. Ah, she will rule the waves for ages yet, thanks be to God. It is good to feel that, and makes one proud and happy. I have a plan for getting this through. Botanical specimens are not examined very closely, I understand.

August 9.

"Utterly prostrate. Father-in-law taking little ones to his own place when he has lifted me on a horse my wife leads, seeking medical aid for me. I write lying on the ground. Thank you for many a kindness, and your wife and her friends for remembrances which my wife and children will cherish for ever. Good-bye. My father-in-law may get what I have written through, somehow."

How that devoted wife fared on her errand of love is told in a letter kindly sent me at Walter's request by a doctor at a mission hospital. Her letter, dated August 28, runs:—

"A fortnight yesterday an Arab woman

brought her husband, an Englishman, to this hospital. He was suffering from acute dysentery, from which he died on August 26. . . . He had lost an arm recently, and his body was badly scarred by burnings. His wife, whose English is very imperfect, made us understand that he had served some twelve months with the British forces in Mesopotamia.

"She had a letter which you had written to her husband, but she showed it me so jealously that I was unable to make much of it. It was evident the poor creature prized it too highly to let it leave her hands. As far as I could make out, it told of toys or dolls sent out for their children, and it might include a reference to a necklace or apron, or ribbons—all of which she wore, and kept perpetually fingering, with great pride and gratitude, whilst she allowed me to glance at the letter. No doubt, though, she intended me to thank you for gifts to the children, if not for the things she kept fingering.

"I am dreadfully sorry for the little woman —very pretty and refined for an Arab. She was devoted to her husband—she must have been,—for she carried him somehow, since he was far too weak to walk or to sit on horseback (at best she must have held him on a horse), for more than seventy miles. She was the picture of despair when he died, and for eighteen hours

she mourned at his grave. It quite affected and saddened us all to see her grief. A few hours ago her father, an Arab sheikh, who seems to have conveyed the children to his own home, came and took her away. She thanked us with tears for what we had done for her husband—little enough,—then ran to the graveyard, and her father had a hard task to coax her away."

"Be so good as to let me know if this reaches you," was the conclusion, a request I made haste to observe, at the same time asking if my compassionate correspondent could tell me further news of Walter's wife. It went to my heart to picture the affectionate creature's grief, and I longed to get into touch with her, so as to show her that British people have nothing but admiration for her husband, and extend the warmest sympathy to herself and her children in their bereavement.

A letter sent at once in reply tells me how inquiries were carefully made within a few days of the poor woman's departure with her father, the hospital people being keenly interested. They found that the sheikh had disposed of property he formerly owned in the neighbourhood of Mocha, and was gone with his family, including Walter's wife and children, on a long voyage, as he frequently did; but the disposal of his property made them feel that he intended making his home on land in some other place.

The doctor's earlier letter contains valuable unconscious corroboration of Walter's story of an arm lost and scars gained in serving England at fearful risk. By a coincidence common in this war studded with wonders, but which would have been reckoned exceedingly remarkable in days before 1914, the doctor's testimony was itself corroborated a while later. A native of the very city where Walter posed as a deaf mute in his erring days—one whom it was my good fortune to render a slight service to when a young girl—was one of the nurses who tended him in his dying hours.

In December 1916 she wrote to me after an interval of six years — being then serving in a British Field Hospital in East Africa :—

> "When Dr Cameron sent you news of the death of that interesting patient we had in Arabia last August, whose Arab wife was such a monument of devotion, I made up my mind I would write and beg you to forgive my long silence. Dare I ask a favour after all this?
>
> "I am so curious about that patient we had, whom Dr Cameron wrote about. Would you tell me who he was, and how he came to take up a Bedouin's life, and whether you sent him out to somebody here after he had come into your hands from getting into mischief?—I am sure it was nothing worse than mischief—he was such a gentleman, so patient and so grateful

—he made us proud of our race. Then he must have treated that Arab wife of his—(were they married out here? I suppose he did not bring her back from England where she had wandered by some chance?)—anyhow he must have treated her very affectionately; weak as he was, his eyes followed her everywhere, and she, poor creature, broke her heart (if one can break one's heart and live) when he died.

"I did not realise at the time it was you to whom Dr Cameron was writing, or I should have asked her to let me add a word. It was only after she sent the letter telling you of our hunt for the poor little wife that I found out—I mean our hunt that failed, because the poor little woman's father had sold his property and taken her right away. We wanted so badly to know more of her husband, and to do everything we could to make her grief more bearable, poor thing.

"Then in October we came here to fill gaps in the Medical Service. We hesitated a long while before we made up our minds about where our first duty lay. We are sure now we did the right thing, for we are nearly overwhelmed with work night and day.

"As we have less chance than ever of satisfying our curiosity about our one-armed British Bedouin patient on the spot, I am

asking you to tell us all you know about him. Please, please do! . . ."

Of course I replied giving all the information I could, glad to have heard from one more person who had seen my British Bedouin in the flesh, and who could testify to that loss of an arm he told of. But I had built high hopes of tracing his widow through the doctor of the hospital, and the transfer of the staff brought all to the ground. My wife first expressed the view that, if anywhere, the pathetic little widow would be found on a pilgrimage to her husband's grave, and I came to hold it strongly. It was disappointing to realise that none would be there to soothe her grief, or to give her messages and tokens of sympathy which a hundred of her husband's countrywomen would gladly provide. Nor did the nurse's letter hold out any hope of the return of the doctor or herself to their former station at the close of the war. Parts of that letter, irrelevant here, told of husbands found, and future homes planned in quite other lands than that Arabia where Walter sleeps.

I had already written to a missionary friend, as long before as the July following the despatch of the April parcel. His reply was that he could find no trace of my hero. He reached the district Walter's family once dwelt in, and was pointed to the site of his old home by "an Arab woman with

a palsied son," who remembered him very well and spoke most highly of him, but who evidently regarded him as an Arab like herself. "He came back half-dead in March 1916, having no left arm and being burnt about the body horribly, after which he was in the very jaws of death, only his wife's devotion saving him," she gave the missionary to understand. The desolation he saw around him was from a fire, the work of marauding Turks, whose cruelty drove the family away. She could tell him nothing of what ultimately became of them. The Sheikh Ibrahim, who lived ten miles off, might give him the information he sought, being Walter's wife's father. It is notable that the woman knew Walter's Christian name. That, indeed, caused the missionary to be certain she spoke of the man he was seeking.

He went to Sheikh Ibrahim's place full of hope. But he reached there only to find if the Arabs he met knew anything he desired to learn, they would not tell, so came away disappointed, the news he had to send me adding little or nothing to what was already known.

It was not till the 4th of June 1917 that I had an opportunity of meeting personally any one at all familiar with the region chosen by Walter as his home, or who had ever seen his wife. Then the nurse, parts of whose letter I have quoted, being home from Africa, convalescent after serious ill-

ness, was good enough to pay me a call. We had a good deal to talk about which does not concern anybody outside her own family, but we were mutually pleased when, more personal matters cleared away, we were free to discuss the affairs of one in whom we were almost equally interested.

Nurse Edith was not sanguine over the chances of my hearing more of Walter's wife and children.

"You see," she explained, "the Arabs are nothing if not nomadic—such as do not live in the towns. They come and go, and are seldom seen again in the same neighbourhood. Our best work at the hospital was itinerary. The people who stay in one place are usually poor, persecuted, degraded specimens of humanity — for the Turkish rule is abominably harsh and unjust and cruel. It is only when you move about, and come in contact with caravan parties or nomadic herdsmen, that you see the better sort of people, and mostly you only see them once. We have had a good many grateful patients among these, who would have taken a lot of trouble to see us again, one feels sure, had they found it at all possible. But I can only think of one or two who did.

"Of course your Walter was quite an exceptional person, and so was his beautiful wife. I wonder how I can tell you how beautiful! It is difficult. She has perfect features, but you see we English make so much of a fair skin, and she is very dark

indeed—not black, but very dark brown. And yet her skin is lovely—like velvet,—or, shall I say, like a peach,—that's better—it gives a hint of the perfect colouring of her cheeks. She is young, perhaps twenty-five, and very tiny; I should say about five feet high; neither plump nor slender; but she is remarkable for her extraordinarily beautiful eyes. You can't forget them once you have had them turned upon you in the way she turned them on us, pleading silently that we would save her husband. I've seen eyes a little like hers, but only as little like as the moon here is like the moon there in Arabia.

"She would kneel at her husband's bedside, hour after hour, holding his hand or fanning his face, but her greatest comfort for him seemed to lie in the bewitching tenderness spoken by those eyes, which never closed and were never turned from his face while she knelt there. We had to be really cross to get her from his bed to rest or take nourishment, and whenever she left him for a moment his eyes followed her everywhere, and he was uneasy till she came back.

"It was pathetic. I don't know that I ever want to be loved quite so passionately myself; it must be heart-breaking altogether when a parting for life has to come.

"Apart from a few words he made Dr Cameron understand, the poor fellow was too weak to tell us anything after he was brought to the hospital. He

knew he was dying, but he bore up like a man. I don't believe he minded anything except leaving his wife and children. The little woman held his hand while he slept away at last, and you know how cruel she found it to leave his grave.

"We never saw the children. What you have told in the letters he wrote you is all we really know of them; their mother was too occupied with their father to talk much while he lived, and after he died she was too full of grief. Then Dr Cameron tried to console her, but the doctor has never been able to pick up Arabic properly, so she made a poor business of it when she tried to make her understand she had still treasures left in her little ones. I think a gift of sympathy she has which can dispense with words made a real impression, however; certainly she got a grateful look she will never forget from those wonderful eyes, which made her, though she is not great at kissing, throw her arms about the poor, lovely little creature's neck and kiss her many times.

"The rest of us, who knew her tongue, did what we could to comfort her as well. She understood us, but she was far too troubled to speak; she could only repay us with grateful looks from those unforgettable eyes.

"I think she mesmerised us, indeed; how else to explain how we came to let her father take her away without finding out more about the family I

can't tell; certainly the sheikh—a very handsome man, whose eyes would have been remarkable if one hadn't seen those of his daughter — was talkative enough. He was very proud of his son-in-law, whom he called 'a fine merry boy, with the innocent heart of a little child, and brave and strong as a young lion,' and we could have learnt a good deal if we'd been able to give attention at the moment to anybody except the poor, dear little thing who fascinated us.

"When they were gone, we came to ourselves, and began guessing about what we might so easily have found out. Dr Cameron wrote to the English friend of our interesting patient, but, as I said in my letter, I didn't dream till later that friend was yourself. Then we bestirred ourselves, hunting about to find what news we could of the family long before your reply to the doctor's letter came, and I discovered who you were through the information you kindly sent about poor Walter.

"Our search for news had little result. We learnt how the sheikh had sold his landed property and gone away in one of his ships, nobody knew where —or, at any rate, nobody would tell where. What you published later about the vengeance wreaked upon the Turks who marauded Walter's home would amply account for his father-in-law taking the family away. Indeed it would be quite unsafe for them to stay after that."

Nurse Edith was most interesting. "How do you suppose Walter's wife came to find you?" I inquired.

"Ah, that's quite a pathetic tale!" she said. "You see, the doctor's been out there nearly fourteen years, going among the people, healing their sick, and winning quite a name for herself. The wandering tribes pass on news of her skill, keeping her so busy she's never really had time to study the language, even if she had any special gift that way, which, to be candid, she hasn't. But I'm not quite sure that's a drawback, really—we nurses have all managed to pick up a workable knowledge of the various dialects in use, and it saves the doctor's time and energy for us to do the talking,—while the fact that she is no preacher disarms criticism of her on the part of bigoted Mohammedans.

"As we itinerate, news of our whereabouts is passed from tribe to tribe, so that all needing our help (and there are very many) may be able to find us. Walter's wife seems to have followed us from place to place, getting there always when we had left, until she had carried her helpless husband, probably leading his horse and holding him, more than seventy miles. Her blistered feet told an eloquent tale of suffering endured without a murmur. Indeed we could scarcely get her to pay the least attention to herself. And the pity of it is we had returned to our station, within twenty miles of her own home, as far as we can tell, when she at

last discovered us, so a great part of her fatiguing journey might have been saved!"

"Your messengers gained some news of where Walter used to live, I understand from that," I said.

"Yes, we had been told already of the burnt home, but not of the way Walter paid the Turks out for it. The messengers found charred ruins partially concealed by the grass which had grown over them in the interval; they found also a widow with an afflicted son, probably the Arab woman with whom Walter says his wife found shelter. But we didn't learn much about the place, really. It seems to have been one of those infrequent oases to be met with in a region usually most dreary and barren and sterile. He must have been easily satisfied, poor fellow, to have been content with such a living as he picked up there."

"Ah, but you see he helped his father-in-law with the ships," I explained; "sailors who have met him, though they thought him an Arab at the time, have told me that. He made his home in the place you mention, no doubt; but he cannot have been always there. I think his father-in-law and himself had ways of earning a much better living than the plantation he speaks of produced. There is a purposed vagueness about all his statements when he mentions localities and modes of living. He knows well enough how to conceal the share his father-in-law had in his adventures. He is willing

to suffer himself for England, but he is not specially anxious to make martyrs of others. That is how I read his story."

"I daresay you're right," Nurse Edith agreed; "anyhow, neither the sheikh nor his daughter look to be in need of anything money can buy—I don't mean they make any show; I am thinking of what money can't buy—that they look quite comfortably off—they wear good clothing, and have good horses, and so on."

"What do you think of my chances of getting in touch with the family again?" I asked; "just give me your candid opinion. I know you've been good enough to explain already how many difficulties there are in the way. But isn't it quite possible the little woman will go to the graveyard where her husband lies? If any one returned to take up the work you left so as to give your services to our troops, wouldn't they have a good chance of meeting her?"

Nurse Edith considered a while, then she said, "If her father will allow her to set foot within miles of the place, no doubt she'll find her way to the grave. But in my opinion it will be years before her father will allow such a thing. I think it will be long before you have more news, if you have any more at all. Of course I am only going by what our own experience has been."

"In short, I may as well give up hope?"

"I'm afraid so; I'm sorry, but I think when the sheikh sent off those last letters his son-in-law wrote, you would pass completely out of his life."

"I sent him the February 'Blackwood,'" I urged, in the hope of getting her to take a more favourable view. "You see, Walter told me to address anything intended for himself to the care of his father-in-law. I sent 'Maga,' not because I thought the sheikh would be able to read it, but as a sort of token that what he sent me got through all right. I wanted him to feel I'd like to keep in touch with him though his son-in-law was gone."

"Do you think it was wise, Mr Holmes?" Nurse Edith asked at this, nonplussing me. "If the story got into German or Turkish hands it would hardly benefit the sheikh. I think you made a mistake there. I'm sorry you sent the magazine."

"But why shouldn't I?" I asked, recovering myself. "Surely he would leave a friend to deal with a good many things a man in his position couldn't settle up in a few days. You know the country, and I don't. Still, I take the liberty to feel you're wrong here. Come, why should there be greater risk in sending the February number of a magazine than that for the previous June, when both contain accounts of adventures equally irritating to the enemy? Yet Walter made no protest about the June number being sent. No, I am sure some trustworthy agent would be left

behind when the sheikh took his departure. If what I sent never reaches him it is most unlikely to fall into German hands."

"Perhaps you are right," she rejoined doubtfully; "and, after all, as the sheikh has gone out of the way of his enemies, who probably know enough to condemn him hopelessly already, it can't matter much. Still, I think it would be safer to wait before sending anything else. I've no faith in anything being sent after him from the old address you have."

It is strange how everybody seemed desirous of conspiring to shake my faith in that address. Yet I am almost certain now it would have answered well enough had I used it all along. Nurse Edith went her way to spend a happy time in Scotland with the husband her African service won for her, who, like herself, was home convalescent, a fortunate coincidence which enabled them to marry months before they had ventured to hope. Well, she is a worthy woman, and her husband, be he whosoever, has found an excellent wife. May they enjoy perfect bliss together for many a long day, and have renewed health and strength to do all the useful work for Britain they look to do again before the war is done.

It was perhaps natural that I should attach great weight to the opinion of one long resident in that country. As it turned out, only two days

after the nurse's call her opinion was discounted by my receiving a communication of a most interesting, if vague, sort, from the very Arab sheikh she held had dropped me out of his life.

The magistrate who formally heard the evidence on which Walter was committed to take his last trial, and who granted the remand which enabled the police to miraculously cure a deaf mute, was led right by his more than forty years' experience of erring mortals when he wrote, after finishing reading Walter's last letters:—

> "The family of his wife and father-in-law acted most wisely in disappearing into concealment and obscurity; and when the war has ended some opening of necessary secrecy will probably allow their whereabouts to be known as a piece of strictly private information, and a means of communication as to their welfare be found; but vengeance, which waits long for accomplishment when necessary, will, I feel sure, prevent a return to the old abodes and more being publicly known about them in the neighbourhood than can be helped."

The sheikh found such an opening before the end of the war. He told nothing of his permanent whereabouts, but he took care his messenger was able to inform me how his daughter and her children were alive and apparently in good health when he left with a package entrusted to him.

It would seem that one skilled in knowledge of men is a better guide, even when ignorant of local conditions and customs, than one who knows a locality well, but who is not so apt at reading the hearts of those who dwell therein; much like the hearts of men elsewhere, for human nature really varies little the world over, spite of veneer here and plain exterior there.

What proved a true forecast of the sheikh's conduct in remembering me, will, I doubt not, be found to prove equally true of his wisdom in keeping away from old abodes. I am almost certain I shall hear from him yet again, but not, I think, next time from the land of Arabia, or any country quite near.

VII.

THE BAGHDAD EXPLOSION.

When exchanged prisoners from Kut reported the blowing up of an arsenal at Baghdad in June 1916, a good deal of speculation was aroused among readers of Walter Greenway's adventures. It was perceived at once that the explosion he spoke of as the work of his Bedouin mute synchronised with the date of that the Kut prisoners had experienced in Baghdad.

For example, writing in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for June 1917 on "Besieged in Kut — and After," C. B., a gallant medico, says:—

"One day, just as we had shut ourselves up to get through the heat of the day, a loud explosion was heard. It sounded like another midday gun, but we lost no time in going outside to investigate. Smoke was issuing from the magazine at the corner, and within a minute or so another bang, and another larger irruption of smoke and dust occurred. And now we heard the rattle of small-arms ammunition, explosion following explosion in increasing violence,

until it sounded like a furious battle going on within a few yards of us. We hastily dressed, told our men to pack up, and went outside and down the steps to the hospital to get the men clear. A Turk rushed in and told us all to clear out as fast as we could. Then came the biggest explosion of all, which nearly brought the place down, and the end of the barracks nearest the magazine began to burn merrily. There was a wild stampede of the Turkish sick and wounded from the upper rooms down the steps and out by the gate. Bits of shell, shrapnel, twisted muskets, and *débris* of all sorts were raining down on to the roof and in the barrack-square. Hell seemed let loose, and shells and small-arm stuff continued to burst in every direction for another exciting half-hour. One shell landed in the hospital on the side of the river, and there were several casualties in the town. A Turkish sergeant ran round to a mosque a quarter of a mile away, had it opened, and told us to take up our quarters therein for the time being; and a very hot afternoon we spent in moving all our patients and kit thither."

On June 14 a friend wrote:—

> "I have been reading in the current month's 'Blackwood' the article 'Kut and After.' Doesn't the description of the explosion confirm Greenway's account of his blowing up of the magazine? In reading C. B.'s experiences

it struck me that the time practically agreed, and it was some time after Kut capitulated and the prisoners had been taken to Baghdad that the explosion occurred. Possibly you have had the same thing suggested to you. I was wondering. If so, it is a remarkable further confirmation of the story."

The same thing had been suggested before. On February 11 a Cambridge schoolmaster who had been good enough to interest his pupils in my hero wrote: "The paragraph I send you from to-day's 'National News' helps to confirm Walter Greenway's story."

The newspaper cutting he forwarded consisted of the story of an interview with Private H. Filce, a survivor of Kut-el-Amara, who had recently arrived at Croydon.

Filce tells how he was wounded early in the siege, and afterwards had pleurisy and pneumonia; how in the hospital the men had to do their best to get better mainly by nursing each other, every fit man being wanted in the defences; and how on the day of surrender, April 29, 1916, he was in hospital with enteritis. He was kept in hospital ten days, then removed to Baghdad on the boat which was captured in the last desperate effort to relieve the British force. Along the banks the natives fired their guns, and in other ways showed derision towards the sick prisoners.

At Baghdad the prisoners were attended by captured British Army medicos, and some sort of arsenal blew up, the sick being shifted to a mosque. After one night there, limping and crawling as best they could, they were taken between Turkish soldiers to another building.

"That was a rough stunt for us," says Private Filce, "for the people treated us to a nice display of peace and goodwill. They jibed, jeered, and jabbered. Having learned two words, 'Engleesh fineesh,' they hissed them out with every contemptuous grimace possible. They threw mud and spat upon us."

Perhaps Filce misunderstood the cause of their opprobrious words and deeds and gestures. Another witness to the explosion seems to suggest that possibly a good deal of popular indignation prevailed against the British because it was suspected they had something to do with that blowing up of an arsenal so valuable to the Turks.

Here is a letter written to Mr Blackwood on April 9, 1917. The writer is a captain of the R.A.M.C.:—

> "With reference to your article, 'Walter Greenway, Hero,' in your February 1917 number, it may be of interest to yourself and the writer of the article to know that I was in Baghdad from the end of May 1916 to August 8 (as a prisoner of war from Kut), and that on June 27 there occurred a very

violent explosion in the arsenal, which shook the whole of the town. Whether this could have any connection with the extraordinary story of 'Walter Greenway' is doubtful, but it is interesting to note that the Turks believed it to be due to foul play, especially as it occurred in the magazine where a large quantity of captured British ammunition was stored; and the presence of so many British prisoners in the city lent colour to the suggestion. I will quote a few extracts from my diary, written on the spot. There are many points which do not agree, notably time of day and place of the explosion I speak of, which was the only one during the time I was there, being in the arsenal inside the citadel in which were the artillery barracks.

> "'June 27, 1916—about 1.15 (midday). To-day we were aroused by a tremendous explosion, which made the whole house rock. There were numerous subsidiary explosions. These occurred in the Artillery Barracks about one and a half miles away, where a magazine blew up. . . . Above the site of the explosion rose up a most colossal pillar of dense smoke and dust. . . . Two mahelas half a mile away could be seen burning furiously: they were completely destroyed.

> "'June 28. It is stated that one officer was killed, and about forty killed and wounded, including civilians. The workmen at the time were mostly away at the midday meal. The actual loss of shells means to us many British lives saved.'
>
> "I enclose the above for what it may be worth, and would be glad if you would forward the letter to the writer of the article."

So three witnesses testify to a tremendous explosion in Baghdad,—according to the two former, some time during their stay in the city, which was from the end of May till the beginning of August 1916, and according to the latter, on a definite date —the 27th of June. Walter Greenway dates the letter written to accompany the one he intended but forgot to post in Aden April 20, the very day on which Captain Smith states that he saw him "trying to tinker up a ramshackle old motor-boat" as the dhow was leaving port. Walter then declared his intention of proceeding on the ship to Basra, but he would seem to have changed his mind for some reason, as he wrote on August 7 concerning his Bedouin: "He left his family at the mouth of Shat-el-Arab, going up to Basra in a boat his father-in-law (an Arab with an English heart) purchased from a British officer two months before war broke out"—no doubt the same boat Captain Smith saw him repairing, which he tested

in the journey from Shat-el-Arab to Basra before starting for his real objective, reached, as he tells us, on his seventh morning from the latter place. It is clear that he may easily have been in Baghdad at the time the explosion occurred. But he is vague in his claims—I think purposely,—and there are discrepancies. It is not certain that he intends us to imagine the scene of his adventure as Baghdad. Sometimes he talks of the arsenal as in the city, sometimes as near by. For my own part, I am convinced that he blew up a munition store somewhere, and I incline to the opinion that it was the one described by the three British witnesses I have brought forward. But it must be remembered that if the Baghdad explosion were proved to be the work of some one else, it would not follow that Greenway's story is fiction.

He tells us how on that seventh morning from Basra the welcome rising sun "revealed the bunches of date-palms and the minarets and domes of Baghdad"; how he found "he had gone too far," but saw "no sense in turning back," preferring to array himself in all the panoply of his borrowed German authority, to rouse the dwellers by the water-side from sleep to carry him whither he would be; and how, "lying serenely in more senses than one, he was conveyed with his goods inside the very gates of the arsenal he sought, some miles lower down the river."

He does not say whether he saw "the bunches of date-palms and the minarets and domes of Baghdad" miles before one comes to the place or miles after passing it. Possibly he intends to make it difficult for any of those messengers he mistrusts as fond of "prying into things which are no business of theirs, and talking about what they see where they shouldn't meddle," to identify him as the person responsible for any particular explosion should they read what he has written. He was, as we know now, a dying man when he wrote; but, though he had a strong premonition of the approaching end, he was not wholly despairing. He speaks of having "only one arm left," and of being "ridiculously anxious to keep that"—which looks as if he sometimes felt, even in the weak state he was brought to, he might live on. In my judgment, however, his real anxiety was to prevent vengeance from falling upon the Arab father-in-law, who had so loyally supported him in the fight for Britain, or the beloved wife and children he was so reluctant to leave behind.

One thing I am quite sure about. He told the truth in what he wrote with his latest strength. Why should he do other? What object was there for him to serve in inventing a claim to heroism? I see many reasons for vagueness, apart altogether from his own strange fancy for writing of himself

mostly in the third person: for one, he was lightly skimming the record of his recent doings; for another, he was too weary to tax his brain with nice details; but, most important of all, as I have said already, he was determined as far as he could to protect those he loved from vengeance. If we are to regard him as writing fiction, wherefore did he delay writing till the very evening of his life? The more I think of it, the more strongly I feel that he accomplished somewhere all he claims to have done. I do not wonder that what he writes should strike his readers as quite extraordinary.

"O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony:
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.
He that no more must say is listened more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to gloze;
More are men's ends marked than their lives before:
The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
Writ in remembrance more than things long past."

Moveover, the gravest discrepancy, supposing his description of the blowing up of an arsenal to refer to the Baghdad explosion, may be easily accounted for. It concerns the time of day. Both C. B., writing in 'Blackwood,' and the other gallant medico, who was considerate enough to ask that I might be shown his letter to the editor of the Magazine, agree that the explosion at Baghdad

occurred at midday. My version of Walter's description says erroneously that the explosion he was responsible for took place at midnight.

I told at the beginning how in his letters, partly from the writing being in lead pencil, and partly from the sheets being torn up, latterly rolled into pellets as well, words here and there are illegible. In copying them for publication I had to guess and fill in as best I could. In a footnote to the part of his last letter describing the explosion I state how five words put in brackets are so badly rubbed in the original as to be entirely illegible, and how, because those are the words I chose to use when the letters were first printed, I retain them to avoid confusion. I take this course notwithstanding that I am sure now my first guesses were wrong.

With the evidence of persons on the spot when the incident occurred before me, believing as I do that Walter is really telling of what they also experienced, I think I went wrong in assuming all he describes to have taken place beween sunrise and midnight in the same twenty-four hours. Under that misapprehension I led off with the initial mistake "day." I should have been nearer the mark had I written in the first blank "time." Still thinking of darkness, I naturally blundered on then, making "midday" into "midnight," "smoke" into "flames," "obscure" into "illuminate"

(notwithstanding that the word was really too long to fit the vacant space without cramping), and "sunny" into "inky" as the last of a chain of errors. Rectifying these mistakes, as undoubtedly they are mistakes whether Walter refers to the same explosion the others tell about or not, but which the others know to have actually occurred at Baghdad, the part of his letter I unwittingly misrepresented reads—

> "By nightfall he was master there. None, he knew, would dare to disobey certain directions he gave for the safe-keeping of his additions to the stores. He was not disappointed when he paid a visit of inspection at eight o'clock. The [time] had passed pleasantly. His clocks were wound up and going beautifully, and the guard slept off their liquor. He betook himself to Baghdad for an hour or two, as he said, on urgent business.
>
> "About [midday] the arsenal blew up with a tremendous roar which shook the earth, whilst [smoke] ascended hundreds of yards to [obscure] a [sunny] sky. He heard and felt and saw from his boat as he tore down the river. 'Alas,' he murmured, 'alas for the faithful who trusted a German! Surely there be few of them left. Those clocks worked well."

It will be observed how easily such wrong

selecting of words to replace those rubbed into illegibility was made possible by misunderstanding eight o'clock to mean 8 P.M. Obviously when 8 A.M. is read, the whole business of guessing follows an entirely different course. But I candidly admit I ought to have known from the "and the guards slept off their liquor," how, wheresoever and whatsoever the explosion described, that "eight o'clock" referred to morning, not evening.

When I pointed out to him the error into which I had fallen, the gallant R.A.M.C. captain who provided the invaluable diary extracts was considerate enough to give me further interesting details of life in the Baghdad neighbourhood, with a view towards aiding in the elucidation of a problem.

> "I quite agree," he wrote, "that the discrepancies are by no means inexplicable, and as far as the time of day at which the Baghdad explosion occurred, perhaps you are not aware of the fact — I had forgotten it in writing before—that in Baghdad there are two times in use, the usual and official time being known as universal or French time, which corresponds with ours in that part of the world, and the local or Arab time, which is seven hours (or five, whichever way you look at it) different, their clocks pointing to twelve o'clock when universal time is five o'clock—*i.e.*, when ours are at one o'clock (the time of the

explosion, roughly), theirs point to eight o'clock. In many of the native parts of Baghdad, and in many of the larger shops, clocks having the two times are exhibited side by side. I have not noticed this in other parts of Mesopotamia, but it no doubt holds good in the country districts more so than in the towns.

"I have little to add except that the shock of the explosion has left a very vivid impression on me, as I was at that time very weak and in hospital convalescing from cholera, and that the pillar of smoke and dust that arose over the explosion was a sight I shall never forget. It was really extraordinary — like the most gigantic dust-devil, only stationary, which hung about for a very long time."

From one point of view the curious fact of two different times being in use in the Baghdad neighbourhood is chiefly interesting as showing the strong conservatism of Eastern ways. Universal time is obviously adopted to facilitate dealings with infidel foreigners, while their own Arab time lags lazily along, five hours behind, and no doubt they are proud of it, and think it far better than the French innovation.

But in my opinion Walter allowed his curious fancy to adopt Arab time for the purpose of humouring his "Bedouin mute." In that case the captain's explanation is most illuminating. If the

eight o'clock at which Walter paid that visit of inspection whereon he found "his clocks" "wound up and going beautifully, and the guards" sleeping "off their liquor," was eight o'clock Arab time, and one o'clock universal time, then "he betook himself to Baghdad for an hour or two, as he said, on urgent business" barely soon enough to reach his boat, how close soever to the arsenal he had had it brought, before the explosion he devised so cleverly and at such fearful personal risk occurred at fifteen minutes past one o'clock, midday!

If this explanation is adopted, the subsequent difficulty of his using a word I have now rendered midday is easily solved by remembering his customary habit of changing rapidly from the Arab he impersonates to the Englishman he really is. Although I am obliged to guess at obliterated words in his letters, and may not even now have guessed accurately, it is certain that only midday or midnight will fit in the space left by the second missing word. There is a faint mi (not ni) as its start, and no hour begins with m, neither is there room for "o'clock" after any other word originally in the vacant place. I think it is clear he wrote either midday or midnight, and I am almost sure the word he used was midday, changing from Arab time to British as he left the arsenal clocks to launch his boat on the return journey down the Tigris.

And if the Baghdad explosion was really his handiwork, reading the R.A.M.C. captain's account side by side with his own brief "The arsenal blew up with a tremendous roar which shook the earth, whilst smoke ascended hundreds of yards to obscure a sunny sky; he heard and felt and saw as he tore down the river"; how overwhelming must have been his exultation as he took his hurried flight! Look at the captain's diary and letters, and at C. B.'s narrative again: "A tremendous explosion which made the whole house rock," and "numerous subsidiary explosions"; "a most colossal pillar of smoke and dust" hanging about "for a very long time," "like a most gigantic dust-devil"; then think of Greenway tearing away from the vengeance of the foes he had outwitted, half-deafened by the furious forces he had awakened, half-concealed by dust-cloud he had created—the deadly missiles he had let loose pelting down on every side and flying over his head!

"If he could destroy that arsenal, what glorious revenge for all his troubles!" his Bedouin mute reflected, he tells us, on his way "to test the possibility of firing that enemy munition store near Baghdad." He had accomplished his purpose gloriously. How it would thrill his whole being, so wonderfully capable of making the most of life, so utterly contemptuous of danger, so filled with desperate devotion for his country, to apply all his

ingenuity to getting his boat away at top speed while finding occasion somehow to make due note of all "he heard and felt and saw as he tore down the river!" If he knew Baghdad to be swarming with British prisoners, the fact that they would be ignorant of who had done the deed would add pleasure to reflection over his performance. He had a lifelong love of concealing his identity when engaged in any extraordinary enterprise. It was just his style to rub his hands with glee as he pictured out the uncertainty in men's minds regarding the cause of that colossal explosion, some guessing this and some that, one definitely fixing blame here, another there. All who ever knew him well will understand how contemplation of men mystified would amuse his journey right on to Basra.

Then meeting that father-in-law, who, we may be sure, was fully cognisant of what had been planned, and whose business would be finished in that region at the moment of his arrival by no mere coincidence, we may easily picture from Captain Smith's description of like scenes a delighted pair laughing and talking together very merrily over Walter's tale of triumph.

And on the waiting dhow was the woman he loved so passionately, and the little children so close to his heart! It is not given to common men to achieve what he achieved. To one constituted as he was constituted, what a wrench every parting so full of

danger must have been; and, by consequence, what unspeakable delight would lie in embracing once again dear ones all the more precious for extreme peril happily past!

What he had accomplished was all the more remarkable from being the work of one in whom the sands of time were sinking fast. It is clear that willing spirit triumphed over weak flesh when he considered himself sufficiently recovered from his first terrible experiences to undertake his equally self-imposed and secret, but even more hazardous, adventure on behalf of England. His enfeebled frame had a few weeks' rest. On the dhow, sailing round the Arabian coast from Basra to Mocha, the inspiring company of loved ones gave him the spirit to plan and carry out the extermination of that band of marauding Turks who had destroyed his home.

It was the last bright flicker of a dying flame. His favourite Bedouin was "back at Mocha on the 2nd August, rejoining his family, happy save for the accursed dysentery which returned with redoubled severity. Nothing stays it. I write feeling his recovery is doubtful indeed." There is almost his last effort at playfulness! In his next sentence he reverts to speaking seriously of himself. "Well, I have nothing to grumble at, I have had my innings. Would God I had health and strength for sake of wife and bairns!" But he had paid health

and strength out deliberately for his country's gain. "It is pleasant," he writes, in great weariness, "to talk, as it were, to a friend who feels as I do of dear old England. Ah, she will rule the waves for ages yet, thanks be to God. It is good to feel that, and makes one proud and happy." One last playful gleam out of the very shadows of death: "I have a plan for getting this through: botanical specimens are not examined very closely, I understand," and in a few hours, forced to confess himself "utterly prostrate," he writes a grateful farewell, "lying on the ground," conscious that his work on earth is done.

His torn-up letters, reconstructed as well as I was able, were exhibited recently to the boys of both his old schools, where, bearing his assumed name of Walter Greenway, he figures prominently in rolls of honour setting forth how hundreds there as lads went out, the bravest of men, to do and die for England—no doubt all nobly, but few in circumstances so truly romantic as he who, twenty-two years ago, made a brilliant start in life after a brilliant career at school, mysteriously broke down at five-and-twenty, was known four years as a criminal, became lost for eight years more, then was found in the war, purified through a good woman's devotion, meet and ready to serve Britain, and, his service accepted and fulfilled, overjoyed at having played a useful innings, "proud and happy" at finding place on England's side.

Of all the multitudes of noble in the war, none have done more nobly than the old boys of British public schools. The deeds of men who once occupied the seats in which they now sit have made their successors in the old schools know well what to look for in a hero. It will not surprise hundreds who look back from the din of battle to the happy playing-fields of Rugby or Trent, that lads who romp where once they romped have given high place to Walter Greenway in their rolls of heroes. Nor will any whose names are found there grudge him that high place.

There is something generous as well as noble in the blood of our race. Ill is all forgotten when opportunity comes to recognise the good. And the ill Walter did has been greatly magnified, while the good is beyond exaggeration.

If, as I have a quaint fancy, he is conscious where he is of the honour the boys of his old schools have done him, I think in some mysterious way the infinite bliss he has will be intensified. I do not pretend to understand how infinity can be enlarged. But that the generous instincts of those lads should bear fruit to his gladness somehow seems entirely reasonable from my queer point of view. Perhaps that is because I feel keenly he was little appreciated and much misunderstood in bygone days.

VIII.

THE FAMILY OPINION.

A HINT given by Major Mills bearing out what I had been told at the vicarage of Walter's old home, I wrote to the aunt who had been named at an address the Major provided. An early reply told me she was wintering with her husband at a sheltered place on the south coast. It was probable they would return home in the spring, when they would communicate further with me.

Nothing was said of that at first, but I found later they had guessed why I wrote. Walter tells in his last letter how his father was a reader of 'Maga.' His uncle, it appeared, shared his father's literary taste. Reading "Walter Greenway, Spy," in June 1916, he strongly suspected, from what was said of the mute prisoner's father being a retired chemist, and the mute himself an excellent linguist who formerly held a position as a corresponding clerk, that he was being entertained by records of the doings of a person he knew very well; so he read the article to his

wife, asking her at the close if she agreed in his conclusion.

"To be sure it's Walter!" she exclaimed. "It can be nobody else. In prison for burglary — getting into houses by attic windows, and convicted ten times altogether. 'A small, lithe, pleasant-faced, swarthy-complexioned, active-looking fellow, with great, dreamy, dark eyes, about thirty years of age' — the writer says — Walter was twenty-nine then, and there's his description to a T. 'He was single'—that's right; he didn't live 'at the house of his father'—he'd mean he was giving the police the only proper address he could tell them; but the facts come in again all right here: his father was 'a retired chemist of some small means'; then 'he had received an excellent education, and was a well-trained and most capable clerk'—Mr Mills told his father many a time he never had one a tenth part as clever—'with an uncommonly good knowledge of foreign languages—it being said, for example, that he spoke and wrote German like a native.' Of course it's Walter! Who else can it be?"

"'He can climb like a cat,'" her husband went on, taking up the tale; "the detective told the missionary, 'and the way he runs along house-tops, from one end of a long row to another, as easy as you and me walk on the streets, it's a sight to see.' Don't you remember that smoky chimney we

had — so smoky we couldn't get the fire to go, and how the rascal came with his friend Mills offering to go on the roof and put it right?"

"I remember the smoky chimney well enough: everything in the drawing-room was ruined; but I don't seem to remember Walter and Charlie having anything to do with it."

"No; I'd forgotten. I didn't tell you. They didn't bargain for giving you so much work getting things straight again, they said when they came to apologise, and found you up to the neck. I recommended them to get off back home as soon as they could, and tell nobody else what they'd owned to me."

"Why, what was it? Why wasn't I told? I'd heard of so many tricks they'd played, it couldn't have been anything very surprising."

"No, it wasn't so much the trick as the fact that its consequences were more disagreeable to you than they bargained for. Of course the brilliant notion was Walter's—to run up a spout with a slate, scamper over the roof, clap the slate flat over the top of a chimney-pot, run down to earth again, then come and look surprised as the smoke poured into the room instead of going up the chimney.

"I found what they'd been up to when I went out to look. They'd been telling me how they could put everything right if I'd give 'em leave

to go on the roof, and I guessed they'd been playing some trick. It was a moonlight night. I saw Walter going up a spout like a kitten. 'Come down,' I called; 'the spout isn't safe; you'll break your neck, and you can't do any good anyhow.' But he went on, reaching the roof, and making straight for the chimney with as little nervousness as if he was crossing the lawn. Then I saw him lift something off the top of a chimney-pot and bring it away with him. He actually came down that spout holding with one hand! All the while Charlie looked on with the most curious mixture of admiration and awe I ever saw.

"'What's that you've brought down?' I asked Walter. Then he told me. 'You'd better tell your aunt,' I said, bringing him in; but when I saw what a mess his prank had caused the few minutes it lasted, I changed my mind. I've been a lad myself. 'You'd better be off, both of you,' I told 'em, 'and not tell anybody. This isn't a trick to be proud of. Don't act anything like it again anywhere else.' I could see they weren't a bit proud. That's why I said nothing myself. It comes back as fresh as can be, reading the tale of his doings, and there's no harm in mentioning it now. Of course I could have told it many a time when I heard of him climbing other roofs later on in similar fashion, but I hadn't the heart. It was merely a thoughtless bit of boyish fool-

hardy devilment—he was only fifteen at the time, —and, whatever he did later on, he was as innocent as a daisy then.

"We were talking together in the private sitting-room we had at our lodgings," Walter's uncle informed me as he repeated this conversation in his wife's presence; "and as soon as our minds went back to the trouble his after-doings brought on his father and mother, we both felt we must make sure nobody was listening at the door.

"We were very thankful you hadn't given his real name. If you had we'd never have taken the least notice of your letter, for, of course, we knew you would be seeking fuller information about him. As you've concealed his father and mother's name, and given the world some worthy deed to atone for what he did amiss, we're both agreed it's only fair to tell anything we can to help you to straighten out the tangle he made of four shameful years, poor boy. We're hoping, too, you'll be able to tell us more about his wife and children."

"And, besides," the aunt intervened, "we're very grateful for the help you gave him. You understood him, and knew how to put him on the right track. That sending him to sea was the best day's work any one ever did for him. We're only sorry nobody thought of it earlier."

It was most kind of them to treat me so generously, but generosity was stamped upon their faces.

They were a stately, well-preserved pair, probably about seventy-five years old, but hale and hearty after a winter in the south. I disclaimed the credit they gave me, declaring, quite truly, that as the suggestion about the sea came from Walter himself, all I had done was to put him in touch with a captain needing a spare hand.

"At any rate he appreciated what you did well enough to remember it over eight years, and to consider you the only friend he had in England worth writing to," was his uncle's comment upon my disclaimer; "if you did so little it is strange he should make so much of it."

"Strange or not, sir," I replied, "I did no more than I have said. Adding together the time I occupied with him in the police-cell, in my office, and on the way to the ship, I gave him less than twelve hours, and spent no more on him than five pounds. I did nothing in the shape of putting him in a berth beyond naming him to the skipper he sailed with when I heard that the skipper was short of men. I confess that I have marvelled often to see how he remembered such small help as I afforded, whereas he seems to have easily and completely forgotten so much more done for him by others."

"You understood him, and you knew what to do for him, that's the reason, sir," the uncle said; "none of the rest of us did. We all despaired of

helping him when we realised he had made himself a criminal."

There was the secret of their failure. It came out inadvertently. "He had made himself a criminal" in the judgment of those who cared most for him, yet he never had been really criminal at heart. What wonder any help they offered was doomed to failure!

"Why have you written him down a criminal?" I inquired.

My question greatly surprised both aunt and uncle. They looked at me, unable to make out what I was driving at. I had to explain.

"You see, I meet real criminals often, doing the work I am engaged in. I confess that on first meeting your nephew I regarded him as the genuine article; his acting the deaf mute, his seeming indifference about punishment, his record, and the tiring out of his friends, all helped to make my mind up that way. I took a much more favourable view of him when he came to me after serving his last sentence and made that suggestion about going to sea; still he remained a criminal in my judgment right on till I saw that old schoolfellow of his, Major Mills, as was merely natural, having so little to go on till then. Seeing the Major, and learning how Walter came to make his start in crime, I had good reason to revise my previous view."

I paused to see if they followed. Their frame of mind was shown by the uncle's "I don't understand you. He was sent to prison for housebreaking or burglary ten times altogether."

"Suppose we call it a hundred times for the sake of argument," I resumed; "that won't necessarily make him really a criminal—an abandoned, wicked person. He may have been merely unfortunate. There are so-called criminals who are weak-minded, and whom it is perfectly useless to punish for offences the quality of which they do not understand; there are others who blunder into crime by accident, as it were, and who continue blundering for lack of somebody to give them a lift back into a safe track; obviously mere punishment is wasted on members of this class, though, like the others, they help to swell statistics. The only persons I consider as rightly entitled to the term are they who spurn repeated opportunities for amendment of life, preferring to go on still in their evil courses with eyes wide open and with reasoning powers sufficiently acute to tell them the true character of their doings.

"Now for my own part I place Walter in the middle class. It is clear that he blundered into crime. It is equally clear that he seized the first chance offered him of starting life afresh under conditions which he could regard as promising. When he asked me to send him to sea, little as I

knew of him, I was well aware he had more in his mind than getting away from the temptation of attic windows. I knew he was seeking a new start in an altogether new environment. What I have never been able to understand is why his friends should be so ready to regard him as hopeless."

"You know what his father did for him, Mr Holmes," the aunt remarked.

"I have been told he found money six times with a view towards putting him on his feet after discharge from prison," I replied.

"And that he was at his trial on the first two occasions."

"Yes."

"He couldn't bring the lad home, you know; his mother was so ill, else he would have done every time he came out of prison—that is, until he felt there was no cure."

"You never met the lad's father, Mr Holmes," the uncle interposed; "I assure you he did everything a father could. He was as good a man as ever lived. Believe me he hadn't a moment's peace after Walter went wrong."

"It was really grievous to see both father and mother," the aunt added; "they'd both made so much of him, and had such high hopes. They'd have given all they had to save him, but he wouldn't let them. I've wondered many a time if his brain

was quite sound. I thought when you were speaking about the weak-minded you felt he was afflicted like that."

"No, I don't think Walter was ever weak-minded," I answered; "I do think his type of mind was such as made it very important to handle him carefully, and that's where I feel everybody failed.

"I'm not criticising his parents especially, still less am I suggesting they were anything other than most excellent people. Let me leave them to illustrate what I mean: Major Mills, now, strikes me as being, next to his parents, the person most anxious to help Walter, and after him, the Major's father, Walter's employer. No doubt you would yourselves also be equally anxious. Yet Major Mills, who was at infinite pains to prove Walter's unbelieved explanation of how he came to enter those premises at that seaside town, and who was fortunate enough to prove his innocence, doesn't appear to have ever thought it necessary to meet the fellow when he left the prison gate after the first or any other term of imprisonment. Remembering the sick mother at home, I can better understand the father's absence, and you yourselves may have had good cause for not being there; but Mills I should have looked to as certain to take care to be ready to grasp his hand immediately on release. It would have made such a tremendous difference. Better that than a thousand letters, which, to a mind like

Walter's, are very cold and formal under such conditions."

"You think if one of us had met him at the prison his whole life would have been changed," the uncle remarked.

"I do," I said.

"Is it often done?" the aunt asked.

"I have known people do it who had to walk twenty miles, and do it for sons or husbands or brothers many times convicted," I replied; "as regards a first offender, only where his friends are either exceedingly poor or exceedingly callous is he usually left to face the world alone."

"But, you see," the aunt went on, "in this case we all knew his father was sending money, and his employer had written telling him to go straight back to work; his apartments were being kept for him—Charlie had arranged that,—and we all expected he'd do what everybody asked. He wasn't a child. There didn't seem any need to meet him at the prison; indeed I should say, with his queer nature, he'd prefer the arrangements as they were; still, you've more experience of these matters and know best."

They had not yet grasped the fact that he came from his first imprisonment believing himself misjudged, not only by the magistrates who sentenced him, but also by his own parents. This was plain when the uncle said—

"I could never make out how he came to start on the wrong road. It was very hard to know what to do with such a fellow, and I thought it uncommonly kind of Mr Mills to offer him his place back. When he threw that kindness in Mr Mills' face I didn't see what more could be done. I read the letter his father sent him explaining how ill his mother was, and I made sure everything had been done that could be done to make it easy for him to get right again."

"But supposing for a moment things wanted setting right the other way round: his friends knew his conviction to be absolutely unjust and wrong; don't you see it was an apology, or at least sympathy, that was wanted, not forgiveness and promise of a new start? He needed no forgiveness; the new start was only the barest justice; you could not expect him to take it unless offered very tactfully. His natural impulse would be to get away from all whom he could dream as by any possibility capable of holding him guilty of the crime alleged against him."

"Look here, Mr Holmes," the uncle rejoined, warming to his work at last; "it's all very well censuring us for not doing the right thing. Now let me do a little supposing. Supposing a strange man of five-and-twenty got into your house by the attic window, and you met him on the stairs at night, and he said he'd been invited to supper there

by some people he didn't know, what would you make of him? I'll tell you. You'd say he was after nothing good, and you'd send for a policeman. Anybody would.

"Of course I know Charlie found the tale was true, unlikely as it sounded. But you couldn't expect anybody to believe it. I always said Walter deserved every day he got in prison for being such a fool as to play such a trick. It never entered my head, nor anybody else's, that he ought to be met at the prison and sympathised with. If I'd gone to meet him it would have been to tell him what I thought of his folly in bringing such disgrace and trouble on his family.

"Because he wasn't met like a baby, he must go on, forsooth, and break into another house similarly, for spite, I suppose! It mattered nothing about his mother being at death's door, and his father breaking his heart: his master might keep his place open till doomsday, and Charlie run his blood to water over him: none of them counted!

"I may as well tell you, it was I who advised his father to give over sending money after six different cheques had done him no good. I could have wrung his neck if I'd got hold of him. You've no idea what bother and trouble he gave us all, or you wouldn't talk as if nobody cared."

"Perhaps I've not made myself clear," I tried to explain; "I never doubted that his friends did all

they could think of. What I say is, I am sorry none of them thought of the right thing, and your own statement confirms this. You all took the wrong point of view, forgetting that the man who enters a stranger's house by an attic window, yet with no criminal intention, is not exactly like ordinary mortals. You could not reasonably expect him to understand how gravely others would view such a performance. Depend upon it, whatever his reflections in prison, they would never take the form of meditating that he suffered justly for his folly while innocent of real crime. The whole mistake on everybody's part at the outset lies there.

"He came to me after ten convictions. The first question I asked myself upon realising that he did not seem to have stolen a pennyworth of anything from anywhere for all his many burglarious escapades, was why on earth did he do these things; and I came at once to the conclusion that, whatever else he was, he was no ordinary thief. Not knowing what I know now, I guessed his strange behaviour to be due to love of devilment displayed in extraordinary climbing performances, chiefly for sake of tantalising the police. Of course I knew there were other reasons behind which made prison as welcome a shelter for him as any other. That is why I felt it worth while spending time, risking money, and worrying a skipper to give him a chance at sea. But I assure you I expected him

to reform much more speedily and effectually than it would be reasonable to look for an ordinary criminal to reform, so, though in a sense I received him as a criminal, I cannot have really thought him one, even in those early days. If I had, I should never have felt so disappointed when he deserted ship after twelve months' satisfactory service aboard. I cannot tell you how surprised and sorry I was when his skipper told me; whereas to be told the ordinary criminal has cast aside an excellent chance of making good is unfortunately no surprise, being much too common.

"It is easy to see now why I had such high hope of him. Those extraordinary letters of his are most illuminating. As Major Mills says, he might have been anything. And, you will forgive me, but in spite of every explanation, I cannot conceive how it came about that his friends let him go.

"I am well aware how, to strangers, that entering of the seaside house which earned him his first imprisonment might seem unaccountable in an innocent man. I blame the Bench for a hasty decision: they ought to have made fuller inquiries, and they ought to have given great weight to his previous good character; in any case, they should never have sent him to prison; but, being strangers, I do not wonder they regarded his tale as incredible.

"Now, his friends are on an altogether different plane. They knew what a queer creature he was.

The slate trick you have mentioned is, I take it, a sample of a hundred strange escapades he indulged in, familiar to everybody who knew him well. Look at that slate performance again. How did he come to think of it?

"I mix among all sorts of people, and I know the device has been resorted to very occasionally before now by astute landlords desiring to get rid of objectionable tenants, difficult to move by ordinary processes. But to Walter the idea would come fresh, an inspiration of his own brain, not something told him by anybody. In the same way he would never dream he was copying burglars in entering that seaside house by the attic window. The originality of the method would be its strong appeal. He was thinking it was hard on him that nobody entered into his peculiar habit of mind when he wrote in his last letter, after the candid 'I have not been what I might,' the 'also I have been misunderstood somewhat.' It is a thousand pities it should have been so. I say all this without blaming anybody. I would not say it, seeing it hurts your feelings, only I feel it to be due to his memory. He was no common criminal. I grant he acted very foolishly, but he had a strange nature, and wanted more care than ordinary men, once he went really wrong."

"So it seems," the uncle said; "you're certainly right there."

We were not getting on. That was plain. Our

conversation had taken a turn strongly suggesting that I had put the good people to the trouble of visiting me only to be lectured on their shortcomings, and that was the very last thought in my mind. Changing to a more agreeable subject, I asked what they thought of Walter's splendid atonement.

"Ah, that's better," the uncle rejoined more blithely; "we shall agree better now. He seems to have met a wonderful woman, and she's changed him altogether. I can't tell you how proud we felt as we read those last letters he sent you—the first were grand—especially where he told of the tortures he suffered without a groan; but those last, picturing the wife and children as he wriggled home all but dead, and the little woman waiting for him among the ashes, and the children tripping in on tiptoe to see how father was getting on—I tried to read it aloud, but I couldn't do it."

"No, indeed," the aunt went on; "you got as far as the middle of the second paragraph—that was all. Then I read the rest, where he tells about the clocks, and getting ready to take them where they were wanted, and how the parcel came, and what delight it gave his wife and children."

"Yes, and I think you broke down, my dear, a little after that," her husband retaliated presently; "but I don't wonder. Nobody who ever saw it could read his word-picture of his early home-life aloud. I was in the club, and a perfect stranger was reading

the tale to a little knot round the fire. He only got as far as that with a good deal of throat-clearing, but the paragraph about Victoria's cough and the primroses broke him down completely, stranger though he was."

"I think he did splendidly in the end, don't you, Mr Holmes?"

The aunt's question was quite needless; she saw it to be such; going on—

"I'm so glad you called him 'Walter Greenway, Hero,' for he was a hero. And though we can't quite agree we didn't do all we could to help him when he went wrong, yet you know we readily admit you did wonders with him. If it hadn't been for you we'd never have known what grand work he lived to do for his country, and what a man he turned out at last. I wonder why he never wrote to his poor mother after he'd settled down. He says his little girl, Victoria, was six years old in April 1916, when he wrote. His mother died in November, four years earlier. So he would be married at least two years before her end came, and it would have been so nice for her to know he was settled at last."

"That's the pity of it," I answered feelingly; "the poor fellow had grown to believe, long before he left England, that all his friends had cast him off, whereas his father and mother, yourselves, his old employer, and that old schoolfellow of his, Charlie as he would call him, were all keen to help him, only

went the wrong way about it. It is quite certain that had he realised the true state of things he would have written to every one of you from his Arabian home, proud to describe the excellent fortune he had found at last."

"You're right there, I'm sure," the uncle agreed; "there's no other way of accounting for his not sending any of us a line when he'd such news to tell. Whatever I think of his four bad years, nobody's more proud of his after-doings, and I'm only sorry his poor father and mother never heard of them.

"It was the same with both: neither could bear his name mentioning before a stranger, yet with members of the family it was all Walter. We kept up the fiction that he was doing well so as to please his mother, promising her every day that he would be coming to see her soon. It was grievous to see how patiently she waited for the day to come, though she went to sleep cheerfully after every disappointment, saying, 'Perhaps, he'll be here to-morrow.'

"You'll have heard that his father went first, at a good old age—eighty-one—but the last eight years of his life were full of sorrow. He left everything he had to Walter's children, should he have children, thinking it too much to hope Walter would ever be fit to trust with money. That was his will, sir; everything to go on as usual while his wife lived;

then what was left, to be for the benefit of Walter's children, and, if Walter had no children—no other provision.

"So, being trustee, I'm anxious to know how to find his splendid little Arab wife, and those three bonnie bairns he speaks of so nicely. It isn't a big fortune—my brother-in-law's income was mostly produced by annuities; he arranged things that way when he retired from business early to give Victoria a chance. It will grow before they're of age. At present it's just over three thousand pounds—what the house fetched, and the furniture, with some insurance money and a small sum in the bank at my sister-in-law's death. Have you heard any more than you printed in your articles? I wrote to an agent at Aden last June as soon as I'd read the first, and he replied that nobody of that name was known anywhere round about there. I wrote again in February, sending him both articles, but I've heard no more; of course there's hardly been time for investigations yet."

I had nothing further to report in the way of fresh news.

"I saved all his prizes—lots and lots of books," his aunt said; "I thought if ever he turned up he might like to have them, and some little treasures Victoria gave him which he prized very highly, leaving them at home for safety. It would be nice to give them to his children. I do hope you'll be

able to find them, or we'll be able to get in touch with them somehow. It was very pathetic to read what he said of Victoria, and it was quite true; I always thought he'd have been quite different had she lived; and if he were here, I'm sure he'd like to think of his little girl having her aunt's trinkets."

"It would be very fitting, one can see that," I answered; "I only wish I could help little Victoria to such happiness, as well as her sister and brother, like herself, to that inheritance which is theirs through their father. But the way is not clear at present.

"The captain under whom Walter served that year at sea called on me lately. He is greatly interested, and swears he will find the Arab father-in-law if he can, should he sail Arabian seas again. But unfortunately he has to seek a new ship, the schooner in which Walter sailed with him having been sunk by the Germans. He has small hope of getting a new ship at once. Schooners are not to be had every day now, and that being the type of vessel he has been used to during a long life at sea, it is unlikely he will be given charge of any other. He fears he is in for a long wait, and doubts whether, when he does get a ship, it will be his fortune to sail his old round. Still, his heart is there, and he will do his best that way, especially as his anxiety to see those children is almost as great as yours. He knows the Arab

sheikh very well, so he has a better chance of success than most folk if only he can resume sailings to ports he is familiar with."

"That sounds very promising," the uncle exclaimed. "Will you give me the captain's address? I'll go and see him right away if you will."

I gave it, and he went at once.

By an unfortunate coincidence, the captain chose to expound to his visitor much my own view of the shortcomings of Walter's friends, but with a sailor's bluntness.

"He's wonderfully fond of the lad," the uncle reported on his return; "'Try and find his wife and children,' he said; 'of course I will; I've told Mr Holmes that half a score times. But I'm surprised any of his relations have woke up. I'd put all the lot of you down as queer stuff, whatever Walter was. There's no wonder at a lad going to the devil when his friends are of that kidney.

"'Why, there was never any more harm in that lad than there is in a puppy. He talked about his little wife having a heart like gold: that'd be true; but there'd be two hearts alike when that pair were together. You've read of what he did and how he died, and of course you're proud to own him now. But what a precious set of numskulls you must have been not to see he was always a first-rater. Did you ever know a lad worth his salt who hadn't a lot of devilment in

him? Criminal! I've seen a few criminals: Mr Holmes has sent me one or two, and I know what a criminal's like. He's about as like Walter as the Kaiser's like a gentleman. I'm surprised at you not showing a bit more pluck in sticking up for a lad like him. Why didn't you all rally round him, one time or another, and sort out what would do for him, and put him to it, instead of giving him up for a bad job right away?

"'It's a rum thing that strangers could see through him better than his own folk. Mr Holmes told me he'd do straight off—when he'd only seen him for an hour or so,—and, for all he deserted ship, I told Mr Holmes when I saw him at the end of the voyage he'd be all right wherever he was; he'd get on without much trouble; I was sorry to lose him, for he was a grand fellow. And you see what he made of himself!'

"That's the sort of reception the captain gave me," the uncle continued; "but when he cooled down we had quite a nice chat together. Unluckily he can't hear of a ship at present, and is rather despondent over his chances. But he's very keen about finding Walter's wife and children — very keen indeed.

"He tells me all the men saved from the schooner when the Germans sank the vessel know the Arab sheikh as well as he does, and he's asking every one of them to let him know if they get

engagements likely to take them into Arabian waters. He says he'll tell you at once if he hears anything from them worth while, any time, as you'll be wanting to know as badly as anybody.

"I begged him to undertake a voyage as a passenger at my charges, so as to hunt for Walter's father-in-law, seeing he looked like waiting a long while to sail a ship of his own again in those seas. But he wasn't attracted by the notion. I suppose he's his reasons for preferring to take the chance of getting there in his own way. What he said was, 'You might spend a fortune going to places the passenger ships call at, and never see him now he's hiding away, as I understand, according to what Mr Holmes heard about that sale of his property. It wouldn't be much use leaving his old home on land if he was still going to potter about the same old ports with his ships. I shan't look for him just where I used to be sure of meeting him, but I think I *shall* drop across him sooner or later, if I look in likely places. Your plan isn't a deal of use to me, sir. I shouldn't find him in a lifetime that way.'

"He made rough play of my anxiety to find the children, too. 'I don't know that it matters much whether they ever get the money or not,' he said; 'it isn't *that* I'm bothered about. I want to find the little things for their father's sake. What he wrote makes my heart go out to them,

and I want to show both the children and their mother how proud English folks are of his doings. I don't believe they'll ever be short of money: the Arab prince isn't a pauper by any means, and he'll look after those children a bit different from the way Walter's relations looked after him.

"'It was just like 'em, leaving the poor lad out altogether because he'd made a little mistake, and trusting his children with the money that should have been his — children they didn't even know existed, let alone whether they were fit to handle it or not. Well, it didn't do him any harm, poor fellow, and it's my notion it won't do his bairns any good. If I can help in the way you want, sir, I will—you can count on that; but your coming hasn't made a ha'porth of difference to me. I made my mind up I'd find 'em if it was possible as soon as I read what their father wrote. I meant letting 'em see that somebody of his blood admired what he'd done, and had a bit of feeling for his widow and her fatherless children; and if I live I will, if it takes twenty years.'"

"I'm afraid you've had a long journey in vain," I remarked at this conclusion of the uncle's description of the interview. "It seemed worth trying; while I knew Captain Smith was pessimistic over his chance of getting a ship, I hoped your news of the fortune awaiting the children would cause him to think of some means by which

it might be possible to find their grandfather quickly."

"Oh, I knew I was taking an off-chance; you gave me to understand that," the uncle agreed, "and I'm not sure I wasted my time in going. I seem to have run up against a great deal of criticism I never bargained for, both here and there, but, between you, you have convinced me that we misjudged Walter's character very badly in the old days. I don't admit that we didn't do our best. All I say is, it is evident you understood him better than his own people. Any resentment I might feel at the plain speaking I've been treated to is more than compensated for by the knowledge that if I ever am able to make amends to his family it will be directly or indirectly through the good offices of friends who proved better than his own people, much as his own people would have loved to befriend him.

"But we can get no further at present, unless there's something I can add to your knowledge of his early days.. Don't hesitate to ask anything you like. All I stipulate is that you shall continue to hide his real name; apart from that you are welcome to have for publication anything we can give you—either of us," and he looked at his wife, who nodded acquiescence.

Several very important particulars, made use of earlier in these pages, were the outcome of this

generous offer. These having been duly noted, my visitors prepared to depart. At the last moment the aunt remembered an interesting item.

"My sister-in-law was of Spanish descent," she said, "and very handsome—so handsome that people turned in the street to look at her, even after she reached sixty years old. You knew my nephew very well; he wasn't as handsome as his mother, I grant, but you would certainly call him good-looking; now don't you think it strange he never had a sweetheart anywhere in England? Just remember how lively a spark he was before you answer."

I confessed that most young men of his appearance and disposition find sweethearts before reaching the age of five-and-twenty—I supposed she referred to his life in England up to that period, as there was small wonder he found no sweetheart later on,—I gathered, however, that he was too deeply in love with his lost sister for any other woman to find favour in his eyes.

"Yes, certainly he was wonderfully fond of Victoria," the aunt assented; "but being fond of a sister doesn't prevent a man falling in love with a sweetheart. Victoria was very fair, like her father, and uncommonly handsome, like her mother. I think, between mother and sister, he was taught to expect too much, and so took too much suiting. Certainly it wasn't for lack of girls to show him

they were willing. There were scores I heard about myself, and scores more, no doubt, I never heard of—Charlie could tell you a lot, I daresay.

"Now I'm quite sure if ever we see this little Arab wife, she'll be a woman of remarkable beauty as well as of remarkable goodness. I do hope you'll do all you can to find her. The children ought to be brought over here and given a good education. I'll see she's made welcome, if she can be tempted to bring them, and the children shall want for nothing while I live."

"You see," the uncle remarked jocularly, "my wife's anxious to show her Arabian princess off, and to hawk those pretty children round for all her friends to admire."

"I can't blame her," I replied; "I fancy a good many share her feelings. Meanwhile there's the finding to be done, and a tough problem it looks like being in these days of restricted shipping—it was difficult enough in normal times,—still, we've good fellows waiting to do all they can, and we must live in hope."

Not having then heard the nurse's enthusiastic description of Walter's wife's surpassing loveliness, I was unable at the moment to congratulate the aunt on the accuracy of her prediction; that remained to greatly delight her another day; also, another description—by a master hand.

IX.

A CASUAL MEETING.

I RECKON it a proud thing to count above five thousand of one's personal acquaintance among the millions who have gone forth to fight for Britain in one or other of those parts of three continents brought into prominence during the war, or on the seas where war has been carried to every quarter of the globe. In some way, mostly a very direct way, too, the whole of these five thousand became known to me through my work as a police court missionary. I had tried to help ninety-nine out of every hundred to a new start, while the odd one in a hundred had been good enough to lend a hand in what I attempted.

The brave men helped have made a great deal too much of my services. Most of them had done little wrong; it was quite easy to give the simple lift they needed to raise them clear of risk of getting into criminal ways. There were a few—I estimate, say, one in thirty — who gave more trouble than the rest. To be quite candid, I de-

spaired of most of these till the war revealed their nobler side. But on the whole my friends went into the fight after long continuance in well-doing had wiped away the very memory of ancient stains.

And the surprising and delightful thing I found was their undying gratitude, which made my service seem so utterly unworthy the place they gave it in their memory. I find it still, continually. Every week some one I had quite forgotten writes from home camp, or trench in the field, or some ship at the world's end, reminding me that I am remembered; or some wounded or convalescent warrior, years out of mind, gives me a call, so that his visit may furnish another name for my long roll of honour. It is all very pleasing, and a little humiliating. One feels one ought to know, without waiting for him to tell, every man's doings when that man claims one as a personal friend. Of course it is impossible. But it is one of those impossibilities which leave one uncomfortable all the same.

I do not see, for instance, how I could possibly know of the military career of Sergeant Fowler, R.F.A., who came to see me to-day. It is fifteen years since his family left this place, and seventeen since, from playing pitch-and-toss to while away idle hours, he blundered into my flock that his time might be occupied with more legitimate

employment. In the interval before the war, the sergeant had become a skilled mechanic earning good wages, so that he felt entitled to take to himself the wife who acquiesced willingly when he determined to answer his country's call. He was on active service in France before the end of 1914, passing scathless through perpetual dangers till the spring offensive of 1917, when shrapnel splinters in the leg gave him his first experience of life in hospital. He greatly appreciated what was done for him there. Being a married man, five-and-thirty, a sergeant, and grave and sober withal, he was a little inclined to view too seriously the exuberant spirit which caused the younger of his comrades in hospital to indulge in pillow-fights and other forbidden pastimes when the nursing sister's back was turned upon charges officially reckoned safely tucked up in bed for the night.

For a while I thought he had called merely to let me know he was "doing his bit," and incidentally, though quite unconsciously, to give a pin-prick to a conscience sore at having failed till now to count him a soldier. His lengthy discourse about the trouble thoughtless youths give angelic nurses seemed to bear out this natural view. Suddenly, however, he said in a tone full of assurance—

"You know my brother Sam, sir."

He had caught me out once more. I had to admit the fact.

"Oh yes, you do, sir," he declared again; "you saw him many a time when you used to come to our house after me."

"Who did he murder?" I asked, seeking to refresh my memory.

"Oh, he was never in trouble, sir; he was a different lad to me altogether," the sergeant corrected with a wistful look, which showed him to regard his brother as of saintly character, quite unattainable by sinners like himself.

My heart rose at the thought that I had not to shoulder in one day the burden of two old friends forgotten, members of the same family, to make things worse. Since Sam in his early days had been too good for my company, it would not grieve him to find I left him alone on reaching riper years. Perhaps my face cleared as my mind was relieved. Something prompted the sergeant to proceed—

"I thought you'd remember him when you'd considered a bit. He had a dog, and it was fond of snapping at strangers, so he almost always opened the door for you when you came."

That saved me. The whole scene came back, with Sam prominent in the picture,—a saint, possibly, but a muddle-headed sort of saint, as I imagined, to pay seven-and-sixpence annually as tax for the mongrel he called a dog, which had but one aim in life so far

as I could judge—a tearing of women's skirts or men's trousers, which suggested careful training at the hands of some enterprising misanthrope of a tailor. Neither was the saint gifted with imagination. I remembered how slight were his conversational powers. It was his custom to reply to my query as to his brother's presence in the house by simply nodding his head.

"How long has Sam been a soldier?" I inquired, thinking of his home in one of a sombre row of tiny cottages, and of himself holding his mongrel by the collar while I ascertained how his brother was doing. I expected the answer to be, since the Act was passed compelling service. Again I misjudged the saint, for it was twelve years.

"You see, sir," the sergeant told me, "he'd fell in love with a girl who was no good to him. We all said so, but it made no difference; he would go after her, and when he found out there was a baby already, he took it so hard he went and 'listed right off so as to get sent out to India.

"He did all right there, though he found it strange at first. He never altered much, always keeping fond of a pet, sometimes a dog, sometimes a mongoose,—they have them for snakes, you know, sir,—and he got on very well with the officers.

"He'd been in India more than eight years when the war broke out, and they sent him to Mesopotamia early on. He got through all right till March last

year, sending us letters regularly right up to then, when his letters stopped, and we heard no more till he was said to be missing,—we got that news last August (1916). The Turks will have him somewhere,—they seem to have had him a good while now—fifteen months as far as I can make out. I hope he's getting proper treatment,—a good many of our men have had to go through the mill when they've laid hold on 'em, though, I've heard.

"Well, Sam was always a great letter-writer, and he used to fill pages and pages with all sorts of things about the country he was in, and suchlike. After the war started, the censor ruled a lot of what he wrote out. Still there's enough left to make a tidy book if it was put together. That's one reason why I've called. I thought you'd like to see his letters. I've read that book what you've wrote while I've been in hospital, and the letters what's printed there, and I thought you'd like to see our Sam's. They're grand letters, I think."

Evidently he was proud of his brother's literary ability. I took the offered letters, and began to read. Little as Sam looked like a writer, there was no saying what his powers might be that way till one had examined his productions. Equally unlikely men had astonished me. But before very long my interest waned. Sam's correspondence was disappointing to a reader not intimate with the writer. Suddenly I noticed the magic word Bagh-

dad. My enthusiasm revived, only to fall again. He was merely reiterating a prediction, common at that time among troops serving in Mesopotamia, concerning the date of its probable fall. The whole tenor of the letter containing the reference which caught my eye showed he knew nothing of ammunition stores there, or reported explosions. A little reflection told me it was foolish to expect news of the kind I desired, the letter having been written six months before what I looked for occurred.

"What was the book of mine you say you read in hospital?" I inquired of the sergeant, feeling it was time I said something, and finding nothing to remark in the letters so far.

"I don't remember exactly," he replied; "it was about some of the fellows you'd helped, sir."

"Yes, but there's more than one book. Was it 'Walter Greenway'?"[1]

"I believe it was, sir; something like that anyhow. I don't exactly remember what it was called."

It used to be a humiliating experience, but I have got over it now: I find people easily forget titles which once I should have thought hard to forget. Shown the book I had mentioned, he recognised it at once as the one he had read. Then, and strangely enough only then, he could tell me—

"There's something in one of Sam's letters about

[1] A volume of sketches published under this title in the autumn of 1916, and containing the first part of Greenway's story.

a Arab fellow not unlike him as Walter Greenway talks about. Of course it won't be the same; but he was deaf and dumb like him. It shows as a man acting deaf and dumb wouldn't be acting a part as was strange to folks there."

"Can you find the letter?" I asked, handing the bundle back.

He fumbled among the correspondence for a few minutes, produced a letter he was confident was what he sought, found it was not; fumbled again; sorted out another; wrong again; searched despairingly awhile longer, then expressed a conviction that he "must have left it behind," and handed the bundle over to me once more.

I spread the letters on the table to see the dates. Taking one written in November 1915 at a venture, as synchronising with the date of Walter's masquerade as Bedouin mute, by a fortunate chance I found I had hit upon the very thing I desired to find.

> "It's awfully cold at nights here," I read after skimming a few sentences referring to family matters, "we get nearly perished sometimes, and the sand blows into your eyes awful. We're about ten miles from a place as they call Ctesiphon. They say there's a wonderful big arch or some'at there, what's been there since Nebuchadnezzar's time, but I haven't seen it myself yet, and there's a blooming lot of Turks and Arabs to get past before any of us lot does.

"It's a rotten country is this, all dust day and night, and, when the sun's up, as hot as a oven, while at night you can't bear hardly for cold. Then what natives you meet with are such poor creatures, it fair goes to your heart to see 'em. Most on 'em's starving. And there's such a lot of disease and sickness about. You meet dozens and dozens with sore eyes, and scores what's lame or blind. If Jesus Christ was here now there'd be some crowds for Him to attend to, what with them, and what with deaf and dumb and mad and that.

"One deaf and dumb chap was stood outside our lines one morning half-dead with cold and hunger. I'll lay anything he'd had naught to eat for a week, he was that clammed.[1] He'd big, black, shiny eyes, and his swarthy Arab face was that thin they seemed to glare at you like lights through the eyeholes of a dead man, begging you to give him some'at to eat.

"We talked kind to him, like, but he seemed frightened to come near us. Of course we didn't know as he couldn't hear what we said. Then the guns began to speak, and we were surprised as it made no difference to him. A shell whizzed over his head. You could hear the whizz where we were, and the shell kept

[1] Hungry—starved.

thirty yards off us, but you could tell as he didn't notice it.

"'Yon fellow's deaf,' I says; 'I'll go and fetch him in, he's clammed to death, anybody can see that.' Two or three of our chaps went with me. We had to be careful how we went up to him, his knees were that tottery—I never see anybody more scared in my life. I'd two or three biscuits as it happened, and I held one out to him as soon as I got near enough. My, you should have seen his eyes then! They stood out of his head like tea-saucers, and he begun to come towards us, holding his hands out.

"We backed then, and he followed right into our lines. We hadn't any food to waste, and water was scarce. You see our mules had all either died or else been killed, and we'd to carry everything with us. We'd only a few biscuits and a bit of potted meat with what drink we had in our water-bottles to last us till next day. But we clubbed together and spared that poor fellow a good meal. It was when he wanted a drink to wash his first mouthful down as we found he couldn't talk. The poor beggar made his hands into a dish, and lapped in 'em with his tongue like a dog, pretending to be swallowing while he set us with his great

melancholy eyes. We soon tumbled to what was amiss with him then, and gave the poor creature what he needed to drink. And my word, he did eat! You should have seen him —just like a hungry wolf,—and, as he got near his fill, if he didn't begin to glare at us as if we were his mortal enemies instead of men who'd rescued him from starving to death!

"I never want to see naught like it again —never. It was awful. He kept on spitting on the ground, after he'd done eating, and looking at us as if he was cursing us for being Christians. That's how we reckoned it up anyway. What else could it be? What had we done for him to curse about? for I'm sure he would have cursed bad if he could have talked. I never saw such faces as he pulled in all my life! I seen a madman or two raving in India in my time, but never one like him. We tried to pacify him as well as we could, but it was no use. He was glaring and scowling at us while he went away, and yet he seemed frightened for all he was so savage.

"They say as he carried on like that in other parts of our lines. Nobody could make aught on him anywhere, only one or two officers as he seemed to take to better, but he didn't bring them a deal of luck; some

of our chaps says as he mesmerised 'em, being young fellows, or happen bewitched 'em; anyhow they were both in Kingdom Come by a week after.

"I can tell you I wasn't sorry when he took his hook. I reckoned naught to him. I've been reading my Bible a lot lately, and that fellow reminded me of them Jews what got Jesus Christ crucified. You can't understand how folks can be so two-faced till you see for yourself. Fancy any Englishman getting folks to spare a meal as they'd miss a lot, and not only showing no gratitude but actually cursing them what had pulled him through! You can't fancy such a thing; of course you can't; it isn't natural. But it's what this fellow did, and he was a deaf mute as had to beg for his living and all, remember. It's because they've got no religion in 'em worth calling religion, only a narrow-minded, bigoted sort of belief what makes 'em hardly fit for muck, alive or dead. Englishmen's made of different stuff altogether."

Not so vastly different from the material out of which that particular Arab mute was formed, if I identify the fellow correctly: for, of course, I take it the saintly Sam is describing Walter's Bedouin.

"You've read 'Walter Greenway,' and you've read this," I said to the sergeant, holding up his brother's

letter; "now have you formed any idea who this deaf mute is Sam talks about? Can you give him a name?"

I spoke jocularly. I had quite made up my mind he would agree off-hand. His wooden-headed answer astonished me.

"Sam doesn't know his name; the fellow couldn't talk, you know, sir, so he couldn't tell 'em, even if he'd a mind to, which I expect he hadn't," the sergeant said quite gravely.

"Bless me, you're as bad as Sam!" I exclaimed, I fear a little petulantly. "Of course no name's mentioned; but isn't it as plain as daylight your brother dealt with the very deaf mute spoken of here?" and I pointed to the parts of Walter's letters describing the very incident Sam related.

The sergeant read what I desired, then turned to his brother's letter again. "It says nothing about two young officers being mesmerised or else bewitched in the book, sir," was his intelligent criticism after a long pause.

"Of course it doesn't; how would he know? But can't you see how both are talking about the same mute? Let the young officers go for awhile. No doubt their death was an unfortunate following of the mute's visit, but it had nothing earthly to do with it; it was only that his antics made your brother and the rest a bit superstitious."

"There's something else about that mute some-

where," he remarked in non-committal fashion instead of answering my questions.

I looked at the January letters, and failed to find anything. Turning to one dated February 17, I read—

> "They say as that mute as I told you about —what was such a villain—has been attended to by our doctors for a bad arm or some'at. I haven't seen him myself, nor nobody in our lot has, but we've heard tell of him. Some of the fellows says as he's had his speech restored through a shock of some sort, and because he'd some sort of grudge against 'em for some'at they'd done at him, he reckons to have given the show away about his own folks, telling where their trenches and guns and whatnot is. They say he's suffered some'at cruel: his folks have treated him very bad.
>
> "I hope as our officers hasn't let themselves be sucked in. I wouldn't believe a word what that fellow says. I believe he's regular possessed of a devil, as the Bible says about folks in these parts. As like as not, he's trying to lead us into some trap. You have to be careful here. You can't trust nobody. None of the fellows as I pal on with thinks a deal of this bloke. Our officers is a bit soft sometimes, but we hope they've more sense than to trust him. He

was no good when he hadn't a tongue, and he'll be ten times worse now he has."

Handing to the sergeant this further corroboration his brother had unwittingly supplied, and asking him to compare it with Walter's continued story, I scanned the next letter, eagerly hoping for further good fortune, and being reluctantly content with this paragraph—

"It seems as if there was some'at after all in what that Arab beggar told about being treated bad by the Turks. Two or three prisoners what we've took lately say as he was watched when he went back to them after he'd been in our lines, and they got an idea as he wasn't deaf and dumb, but was acting, so as to spy on them. They're a suspicious lot altogether, I should think, but I don't wonder at 'em suspecting that chap. Well, they played Hamlet with him by all accounts, firing big guns what they'd chained him to, and burning him with hot irons, and I can't tell you what else; and yet it turned out as the fellow was deaf and dumb when all was said and done. He got away from 'em somehow, and come back here as I've told you. He'd be frightened when our doctors took his arm off, and that would be how he'd get his speech back. I can't find out as he told aught worth telling, though. Some says he did, and some says he didn't. He

seemed very anxious to be off. He'd gone one morning when they looked for him. He'd told a rum sort of fairy tale about a wife and three or four children somewhere near Aden, but nobody took a deal of notice on him. I don't know as it matters very much. He was no good to us, I'm sure; and we took good care as he didn't see enough to do us any harm, choose where he's gone. All I hope is as none of our officers is going to be led astray by his crazy tales. We've enough on here without seeking trouble."

There was no further reference to the mute in the few remaining letters—written before their writer was set down as missing. I turned to his brother—still unable to see any strong resemblance between the mutes described respectively by Walter and Sam—and found a curious explanation for an extraordinary lack of insight. He had conceived Sam's mute to be so great a villain he could not reconcile him with that friend of the British Walter described.

"You see, Mr Holmes," he said at last, "that fellow Walter Greenway's talking about being deaf and dumb was Walter Greenway himself. Now does it stand to reason that he'd let his own countrymen think him as bad as our Sam says that other deaf and dumb chap was? Choose how much he'd acted at first, you may be sure

our fellows would know who they were dealing with before Greenway went away; whereas they never did get to know our Sam's villain. He was too bad and too fly to let 'em.

"What I think is this: there's a whole lot of deaf and dumb folk in a God-forsaken land like this is. Walter Greenway had been there long enough to find that out. So he took advantage of it to work off a trick on the Turks. The deaf and dumb real Arab that our Sam talks about is one of them prowlers what Walter Greenway imitated. That fellow as our Sam saw only came into their lines once: the one he heard of, and thought was the same, would be Walter Greenway himself. Our Sam got wrong through not seeing him himself, only hearing what other folks said about him. He'd no opinion about the fellow, and so, getting wrong, he put Greenway's tale about his own wife and children down to him, and of course he didn't believe it."

I copied the extracts I required, then handed the letters back to the sergeant, who seemed grieved that I made no offer to work them up into book form. Presenting him with a copy of 'Walter Greenway,' I said as I bade him good-day, having learnt that he was staying here a week, and proposed seeing me again—

"Just compare those letters Sam sent you with those Walter Greenway sent me, and take your

time over the job. When you call again let me know what conclusion you've come to by then. At present you're a long way off the right hang of things to my mind, but I want you to make up yours for yourself."

He promised to do what I asked. I had no need to occupy myself similarly. To me the identity was obvious throughout. It was only by assuming the sergeant to entertain a violent prejudice to Sam's mute, born of that unfortunate description of heinous ingratitude, that I could account for his unintelligent attempt at explanation. It seemed plain that a little consideration would bring him into line with my own point of view.

But I was disappointed there. The sergeant might or might not be highly intelligent; at least he was consistent.

"I can't see as they're the same men, sir," he reported three days later. "You can tell as Walter Greenway's playing at being deaf and dumb, describing how he took our men in as well as the Turks, and enjoying it all. To do that he'd have to carry on as if he was mad, as you may say, because he'd know that's how them villains act as he was imitating.

"But our Sam's mute, as he talks about, was the genuine article without a doubt. I don't say as he did our men any harm, but I'm sure he'd never do

'em any good. I've read Sam's letters all through, fifteen or twenty times over, and I'm certain there was never any good in the fellow he talks about. You can see as none of our men believed in him from beginning to end. At first they pitied him, then, when they knew what a two-faced mongrel he was, and how bitter he could be, they took care not to let him see a deal for fear he'd do 'em some harm.

"I won't say as our Sam wasn't deceived when he wrote about the mute the Turks tormented as if he was the same which he saw. I think he was. I think his head was that full of the one he'd seen, he mixed the other up with him. And the other 'd be Walter Greenway himself, acting the mute. That's my way of reckoning it all up, sir. Happen you won't agree with me, but there it is."

I did not agree, but the sergeant having reached a conclusion so hopeless from my point of view, there was no more to be said about the matter.

"Do you think Sam's much chance of getting out of the Turks' hands, Mr Holmes?" he asked before leaving me.

It was a question I should have preferred not to answer. When one is aware that while British prisoners fall into Turkish hands continually, as they must, the number the Turks are said to hold decreases rapidly, yet few escape, there is but one conclusion to be drawn, and that conclusion one had rather not mention to a near relation of any prisoner.

Still the sergeant pressed for a reply. When he had it he said grimly—

"I see you think like I think, sir. Well, all I can say is, if the Turks are allowed to rule a bit of country anywhere any bigger than what'll do for their graves after this war's done, then I shall wish for the first time I'd never joined up when Lord Kitchener asked for men! They're devils, sir, and they want an army of Walter Greenways to deal with them — men as know their tricks, and aren't afraid to stand up to 'em till they're wiped out, even if they're laid low themselves in doing it."

We agreed better there.

X.

FRUITLESS INVESTIGATIONS.

It has been mentioned how full of admiration Major Mills was upon reading the only letter of Walter's last batch I had pieced together when the time he could spare me expired, and how he made me promise him an early copy of the whole set on publication. It hardly needs mentioning how gladly I fulfilled the promise, letting him see the reconstructed MS. itself, indeed, first, and afterwards furnishing him with a version not quite so difficult to follow.

He did not hasten to show appreciation of my remembrance, being engaged in something he thought more practical. Reading of his friend's death at the mission hospital, and feeling exceedingly sorry for the widow and her fatherless children, he conceived the notion that it would not only be quite possible but perfectly simple to find them, notwithstanding what I had told of the experience both of the hospital staff and of the missionary friend I begged to make investigations.

The firm he served when discharging civilian duties had an Eastern representative familiar with Arabia, whose ordinary business the war had so curtailed as to bring him to England seeking further agencies. Major Mills saw him, discussed at some length the prospects of the undertaking, and finally commissioned him to seek out Walter's widow, taking little count of cost.

Setting off at the beginning of February he reached Mocha in March, staying there three weeks to make an extensive tour of the neighbourhood, where he easily found the property formerly owned by one Sheikh Ibrahim, who, he learnt, had a son-in-law. The sheikh had removed, he was told; concerning the son-in-law none whom he met would say a word; about the sheikh's daughter and her children almost equal reticence was shown; he could not make up his mind whether anything definite was known or not. To be rid of him, as he judged, the Arab boatmen who were his best informers among a doubtful set, suggested it was possible he would learn more at Aden, whither he proceeded next.

Here he was fortunate enough to meet a man able to direct him to the mission hospital where Walter died. It was a long way from the town, the return journey occupying a whole week, and at its close he had merely learned how the staff of the hospital had temporarily abandoned work

in that region. They had transferred themselves to India, according to one Arab woman left in charge of the building; according to another, to Mesopotamia; only the women's ignorance of the real whereabouts of the staff was at all clear. Both remembered a one-armed patient, "with a beautiful wife," dying there the previous year; both believed him to be an Arab; while neither had the faintest notion from what part of the country "the beautiful wife" brought him. The seventy miles mentioned in the doctor's letter putting the investigator on a false scent, he decided to hunt for the ruins of Walter's home on returning to Aden, thereby giving himself the trouble and annoyance of going over again the larger portion of his journey to the hospital, for those ruins turned out to be within twenty miles of that building. Unfortunately for him he had not Nurse Edith's information to go on, or he might have saved himself much painful labour.

He saw an old Arab woman near the site of Walter's home—"a poor, shrivelled-up, bony thing," as he said, a widow, "the mother of a man helpless from palsy." She told him of a young Arab prince who formerly lived there with his wife and three little children, "the very light of her life," till Turks came and destroyed the homestead after carrying off all they desired as spoil. Having said so much, "she shut her mouth like a steel

trap," he reported, and would not say another word. He easily identified the young Arab prince, but do what he would he could not get the woman to acknowledge whether the Sheikh Ibrahim he had heard of at Mocha was Walter's father-in-law or not, nor would she say, if she knew, where Walter's wife and children were gone. He thought her attitude particularly stupid, indeed. Possibly a good beginning made him expect too much. It was annoying, too, to realise that, had he but known it when he visited the sheikh's former possessions while conducting investigations from Mocha, he was barely ten miles from the spot on which Walter's home once stood, an outlying corner of that very property in fact.

Not a bit nearer a solution for all the money he spent in trying to bribe Arab boatmen in Aden, upon returning from hospital and homestead, and having made vain inquiries of all British residents he thought likely to be of service, he concluded this at least to be certain: Walter was an Arab to all he had met on land in the country of his adoption; the British knowing nothing of him, and the Arabs keeping what they knew to themselves, it was useless to seek news save through the Arab father-in-law. The one thing left was to hunt the old sheikh down.

Giving up the Arab sailors as hopeless, he made inquiries on every British ship in port, on the

chance of meeting some one who knew Sheikh Ibrahim, dhow-owner, and father-in-law of an Englishman answering Walter's description, and masquerading as an Arab. He went wrong there. Not a soul was helped by his mention of a masquerade. Possibly a good many people were hindered. It must have misled many into failure to identify a man they would have known very well if described as an Arab. We know from Captain Smith's account how Walter completely deceived those who knew him best, and it is not likely that strangers would suspect his disguise where intimates had no suspicion.

They would know Sheikh Ibrahim among many owners of Arab dhows; no doubt they would have identified him at once had they been simply told he had a son-in-law, evidently about forty years old, who sometimes sailed with him. The investigator's statement that the son-in-law was British only served to mystify them. Not one had so much as heard of an Arab dhow-owner whose daughter had married an Englishman.

There was the further handicap of being without information concerning the personal appearance of a particular sheikh where sheikhs are common, even sheikhs of the same name. The investigator did his best. Yet he set off to visit every tiny port between Aden and Muscat with the scantiest of directions regarding the man he sought. At

Muscat he would appear, from information which came to me later, to have missed the sheikh by two months at the outside; but it is questionable whether he would have gained much had the ships in which they sailed put in the harbour simultaneously. He still continued his hopeless quest for an Arab with an English son-in-law, supposing in some extraordinary fashion that all Englishmen would have penetrated Walter's disguise. It is strange he should have made this mistake. He had a printed copy of Walter's letters with my story of his career. The only English persons mentioned there as aware of his real nationality are the doctor who tended him at his death, the missionary who sought him at my request, and his old skipper to whom he disclosed himself at Aden. He states distinctly that "our own men" with the British force "were about as mystified as the rest." Even the "something" one or two learned "from the Bedouin mute," which Walter hoped would "help their plans a little," had probably no connection with any revelation of his nationality. For "everybody was wondering what would become of the poor body, when he coolly told he had a little place of his own not a thousand miles from Aden. Once he got there, he said, he would do nicely. A wife and three bonny childen were awaiting his return home. He had been settled in that district eight

years, and, hearing there was war, had felt his blood stirred with a longing to take some part 'for George' in the fight, calling our gracious King by name in a fashion perhaps excusable in one so long a mute." There is nothing whatsoever in anything he tells of himself to suggest that, till he hailed his old captain at Aden, he allowed any one to guess he was anything other than "one of the family" he told the skipper he had joined.

Under the circumstances it is not in the least surprising that the investigator found no one at Muscat to help him. Feeling his way along the Arabian coast of the Gulf of Oman, he entered the Persian Gulf to search every Arab port as far as Basra, and to find only disappointment. He had occupied five months, spent a considerable sum of money, taken endless pains, yet was able to sum up in a telegram containing twenty words the negative results of his mission. Letters already despatched to Major Mills prepared the way for news of this sorry ending. It is regrettable that the Major should have decided so precipitately upon the adventure. Of course he knew as much as I could tell him at the moment; he knew also that I had small hope of learning more. I suppose he felt that to allow time to slip away before beginning the task of seeking for Walter's family would only add to its difficulty. But I think I should have given

better advice than to search for an Englishman's family when it was obvious that all who were inquired of, once the mission hospital was found deprived of its British staff, would regard the man sought as an Arab!

The Major does not concur. He says I can easily be wise now I have fuller knowledge: any fool can tell by this how Walter habitually passed as an Arab all those years, but who was to know it then? As far as he is concerned, it never entered his head to suppose that passing off as a Bedouin mute to be anything else than a temporary measure of deception, assumed partly to deceive the Turks and partly for the fun of mystifying our own men. He took it quite for granted that with his wife at home Walter was an Englishman, and also that everybody thereabouts knew him as such. The man who made the inquiries could not be blamed for never suspecting what game the rogue had been at.

"But leaving all this, Major," I said, when, having heard his tale of the failure, and given my unwelcome opinion of how better success might have been found, it seemed advisable to turn the conversation; "supposing your man had found Sheikh Ibrahim and Walter's wife and family, what was to happen then?"

"He was to bring them here, of course!—what is there to grin at?"

I regret that as I was rude enough to smile at the Major's impetuosity, the rebuke was deserved.

"Are you sure they'd be willing to come?" I asked.

"Willing to leave a desolate and damned country like Arabia! I should think so—why not?" he inquired in reply, greatly astonished.

"You may be right," I remarked; "personally I think it's as well your man did fail if that was his errand. Why should anybody suppose they want to leave that part of the world so badly as to put themselves under the care of an utter stranger, and come thousands of miles to a country they must have heard of as dull and damp and cold beyond imagination in comparison with their own?"

"Not want to leave Arabia! What stuff you talk! Doesn't the mission doctor say the family had left the place already? What was there to keep them, with the hell-hounds in full cry after Walter's exploits against the Turks? Poor beggars, they had to leave; wherever they are they're hiding while the storm poor Walter raised has blown over; you can bet your last shilling on that"—the Major was very confident.

"Oh, I think they're hiding: I don't suggest anything else, indeed," I answered meekly; "but I'm certain that little Arab woman would trust her father a great deal more implicitly than she would trust your messenger, and I'm equally certain her

father would never consent to her leaving him. As for that old prince fleeing to England for refuge from vengeance, come, Major, the whole idea's too ridiculous!

"You're obsessed with the old notion that Walter's nationality dominated all his movements in Arabia, whereas it only bubbled up because of the war. Apart from that splendid bit of service he did for his country, he had become an Arab in every sense, learning to love the land of his adoption because it was the home of the wife and children he worshipped devotedly. It isn't the least bit likely he gave them a pleasant picture of England; instead of that I think he would be silent because of what happened to him here, except, perhaps, that he would speak enthusiastically now and then of his old home. When he knew he was dying there is no suggestion that he wished it possible for them to come here. He trusted his wife's father as 'good,' and herself as 'an angel' who, he said, would be 'both father and mother' to the children when he was gone. To me it seems quite plain that he never had any plan for them save to remain among people of their own race.

"And I must say I think he was right. It is my strong conviction that his father-in-law is well able to look after the family, and will insist on doing it. No doubt it was good policy to clear out of the Aden neighbourhood. But that is not to

say he need seek a home as far away as England. I don't think he'd entertain the idea for a moment. Why should he?"

"We shall never get them to England, then," the Major rejoined helplessly.

"I've no expectation of the sort myself," I agreed; "I do hope to get further news of them, but I don't think they'll come here while the old sheikh lives."

"You've seen Walter's aunt and uncle," he went on, slightly changing a subject a little distasteful to him by now; "they're wanting to get in touch with the family—you know why. We were talking, when I called on them yesterday, about those last letters of his. We're all a bit nettled because he doesn't mention any of us. It's unreasonable, perhaps, but we should have liked to think of him remembering us if only by a word at the last."

"He couldn't put everything down he thought about," I suggested.

"No, there is that. Of course it doesn't follow he never thought of us. We must have come in somewhere when he was going over old days. He used to be very fond of his aunt and uncle, and I can't believe he ever quite forgot me.

"They tell me you set us all down as a pack of lunatics because none of us went to meet him any time when he came out of prison—and especially when he came out first time. Now I daresay there's something in what you say. But don't be

too cocksure. Neither you nor any man who ever lived could quite reckon Walter up. You told the old people nobody thought of meeting him at the prison gate. You're wrong. I did. I considered the thing well. And the more I thought about it, the more certain I grew that it wouldn't do. Do you think I'd have minded any amount of time and trouble? I'd have been outside the gate all night waiting if I'd thought it would do a ha'porth of good.

"But, for one thing, it didn't seem necessary—there was the governor's letter, as well as those I sent, besides at least one I know his father wrote, and everybody put what had to be said so kindly I looked for nothing else than his coming back to work straight off,—and for another thing I made sure he'd like to come back quietly, in his own way without any fuss. So you needn't make quite such a song about what we left undone. I'm not a bit certain he'd have liked to be met at a prison gate any time. I know you're familiar with the ways of the ordinary man let loose, but Walter never was an ordinary man, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you're out of your reckoning here. Anyhow, even if we did the wrong thing, there's no need to slang us about it. You've plenty to crow over, getting his letters where we get none. Try and be satisfied with that."

It is a thankless business trying to show well-

meaning people where they go wrong. A good many folk try to put me right from time to time, so I know the feelings of those hauled over the coals. I think I made the Major understand I had no intention of being unduly censorious, but I am quite ready to own it was hard on him to be given the impression that I held him to have blundered badly twice, where his whole purpose was to show devotion to an old chum. I could neither say I honestly thought he went the right way about the task of helping Walter after imprisonment in the old days nor that of seeking to give aid and comfort to his family more recently. However, he realised I had to account somehow for Walter's false reputation as a criminal, and, apart from a little natural soreness, he did not really mind very much if I felt it necessary to include himself among those who might, by acting more wisely, have saved him from coming by such a name.

"There isn't much hope, you think, then, of us ever seeing the wife and children Walter writes about so beautifully," he said, returning to his favourite topic; "but what about following them up by sending something to let them see they're not forgotten. I admit my man failed badly, whether you're right or not in thinking he went the wrong way about his job. How are you going to tackle the problem? You say you hope to hear further news of them—how?"

"I really can't say. All I can tell you is I have a feeling that I shall! No doubt Walter's uncle told you all about Captain Smith, and what his views are. Since I saw the aunt and uncle I've found another possible messenger — not much to depend on, but still somebody. As a matter of fact this messenger, a sailor, saw the Arab father-in-law, with Walter's wife and children, in Basra as late as last March, and he brought me a package the sheikh entrusted to his care. I think, if nobody else can manage it before, this sailor may run him down after the war is over, for he seems to know him very well. For the present his ship is taken off its regular route, and, with the rest of the crew, he is employed in waters nearer home. It is just a chance, I own, but one of several chances, any of which may turn out successful. It is quite clear the old Arab is well known to quite a number of British seafaring men, and it doesn't seem too much to hope that somebody will be able to deliver a message for us some day.

"Then I'm not a bit certain it isn't safe to send what one cares to send for the family to the address near Mocha which Walter gave at first, and which I came to distrust, why I can't tell, when I calmly reason the matter out. I'm risking things there again, anyhow. I sent a box of sweetmeats last Thursday in the hope that it would reach the children. If it does, I think some token will be

sent to indicate its arrival. If it doesn't, it can't be helped. It's a way worth trying, whatever comes of the effort."

"But what's the good of merely exchanging tokens," the Major grumbled; "what Walter's aunt wants, and what my wife wants, and yours too, I expect, is to hug that splendid little woman, and to cuddle those poor orphan bairns a while. Letters would be poor substitutes, but letters, if they could read 'em, would be better than boxes of sweetmeats which anybody might send, and think no more by it than I should if I handed out a dozen to children at a school-treat. I'm not a bit in love with this token business. It doesn't lead anywhere. Come now, what is the use of it, if there is any use in it? Apart from telling you they're alive, and apart from telling them you're alive, is it the least bit of good in the world?"

"Now, Major, don't make out you're as dense as that!" I corrected hopefully; "I'm not proud of my plan; I don't claim perfection for it, but it has points. To an ordinary wooden-headed Englishman the fact of a series of parcels sent to a certain address reaching the person for whom they were intended, though that person no longer resides anywhere near, would seem to indicate an agent familiar with the person's present whereabouts. Supposing I can satisfy myself that such parcels as are not lost on the way out duly reach Walter's

family, it seems to me that when Captain Smith or any other sailor familiar with the sheikh is ready to start searching, such an agent may be worth looking up. In the meantime the mere sending of boxes of sweetmeats, however unsatisfactory in itself, may do something towards showing an abiding interest here in the family, which will prepare the way for messages and tokens of a more personal character when such is possible."

The Major was hypercritical. "Are you sending the same sort of sweetmeats you sent in the parcel Walter wrote about?" he asked.

I confessed I was not.

"Then how will they know you've sent them?"

"By my handwriting, and by the heading of the notepaper I used in writing the formal note enclosed in the parcel. In case they meet any one who can read English the few words I wrote can be read to them, and at worst they will recognise I am using the same sort of paper Walter received from me once or twice."

"I see; that sounds all right. Let the next half-dozen boxes you send be mine, and let my wife and little girl send something with each parcel, there's a good fellow. They'll be delighted. Will you now?"

"Certainly—with pleasure; but you quite understand I've only faith to go on. I can't prove that anything's reached the family since the things Walter rejoiced over so much."

"Of course you can't—nobody expects it; but what matter? Your way isn't a hundredth part as costly as mine, and it can't succeed worse. I know you think me an awful ass over that business, now don't you? I was always impetuous, like Walter, only I never had his pluck. I can see it now. I ought to have waited a few days till I could get in communication with you and compare notes. Then the job might have been tackled with better prospects. I didn't give the fellow a chance, bundling him off with half a tale. You could have put us up to Walter's dodge of living like an Arab all those eight years, for instance—as it was we never dreamed of it. It's odd, but I always pictured him till to-day as trying to make his wife and children English like himself, instead of making himself like his wife's people. Of course you're right. That's what he did, most certainly."

I felt downright sorry for the Major, his anxiety to do something for his old friend's family was so obvious. I wished with all my heart Walter had chanced to mention his name. It would have given him such immense satisfaction, and he deserved recognition at least a hundred times better than I. How strange that the chance action of a single day should count so tremendously above its real value, while the unswerving fidelity of a lifetime should, for all that was said of it, seem clean forgotten! Yet such a thing has happened millions of times,

and will continue to happen while the world lasts. Throwing back upon the only explanation I could think of, I replied—

"I know you got carried away by your enthusiasm to help the family of a chum you thought the world about, Major. I can't honestly say I think the expedition you sent out ever looked like being worth while, but at least it did no harm. Probably I should have been just as impetuous had I ever been on the same terms of long and close friendship with the poor fellow as you; and were it not for being in a trade where one learns caution—slowly enough, I admit—still one does learn not to jump at things quite as one used to do. There is something in a wait-and-see policy. It can be carried too far, I know; but things have a marvellous way of working themselves out in time.

"It wouldn't surprise me in the least if it should turn out that among his belongings is found something he has written which tells that he never forgot you, or his aunt and uncle, though nothing we have seen so far gives a hint of it. You know his nature better than I. You must, since you were boys together and saw each other daily, the best of chums till you were both five-and-twenty years old, whereas I never spent more than twelve hours in his company, all told. I can tell you're disappointed because it should be my luck to get his letters, and I'm sorry it should seem as if you dropped clean out

of his mind. But I don't think that was the case really. I think when he pictured his old home you must have been there in the background—you and his aunt and uncle,—but he wasn't writing a book; his space was not unlimited, and he wrote 'in great weariness,' as he said."

"What's that,—you feel there's a chance he *did* remember me? I wish to God I could believe you're right!" the Major exclaimed at the suggestion.

"You know him best. I am only saying what seems probable to me, with my limited knowledge of the man," I answered.

"But what makes you think he may have remembered me, when there isn't the slightest hint that way in anything he ever said to you or any line he ever sent?" the Major pursued, not unnaturally. "I've never forgotten him; I'm not going to brag about the way I slaved to put everything right, as I thought, after he had got in that first mess, but I'll say again I left nothing undone that I considered worth doing. It was a regular knock-out when he refused to come back to business. He was in another scrape before we'd time to get over our disappointment, in fact. But that didn't prevent my having another try to help him. He was never out of my mind. I don't believe he was ever out of the mind of any of the lot of us—his father and mother, his uncle and aunt, the governor, who thought the world of him though he didn't say

much,—all were just as concerned about him as I was. When he disappeared altogether, and no more was heard of him till his story appeared in 'Blackwood,' that didn't mean any who were left alive didn't often think of him. I can tell you we all did.

"When I told the governor I'd run you down and heard what little you had to tell besides what you'd printed, he was keen to know every fragment I'd gleaned. He'd read the story and tumbled to Walter Greenway's real name as readily as I did, so he was waiting to hear more. The best news I had concerned those letters you were struggling to decipher then. I told him to look out for 'Blackwood,' and one of these days he'd have a treat.

"When I saw him again he said, 'What a wonderful fellow Walter turned out after all; it's a long while since I read anything that touched me more than the way he could face death at last. There never was any harm in him. He was a strange lad always. I wish we'd found out how to help him back to a proper life here, instead of letting him leave England. It's never been off my mind—the extraordinary way he went wrong, and his extraordinary persistence in a mad career. We did our best, I know; but, looking at the way he made good in Arabia, it seems odd we couldn't get him to pull himself together here.' That's how the

governor talked. I know my own father pretty well. He doesn't say much. When he gets as far as that you know he's been thinking furiously.

"I'm telling you this to show you that Walter hasn't by any means been forgotten here: my wife, who never saw him, knows him better than you do, I've talked so much about him; and even my four-year-old little girl could tell you a good deal about her father's old chum—as he was in days you talk to children about. If analysing one's own feelings goes for anything—I mean if one can argue from one's own experience—then Walter ought to have thought of the whole boiling of us fifty or sixty times a day."

"I won't commit myself as far as that," I answered; "still it seems perfectly certain to my mind that he must have thought of you all continually. Why he never wrote any of you a letter is beyond me. I can only repeat the guess I made to his aunt and uncle—that in some queer fashion he had grown to think you would not welcome letters, —or else he resented an imagination of his own creation that you wrote him down a criminal. Possibly one or the other of these reasons may have caused him not to write letters. But letters would not appear to sum up his whole writings.

"Here is a manuscript, copied from a most remarkable composition of his, brought by a messenger the other day. Read it, if you can make my writ-

ing out, and let your father and his aunt and uncle read it. Then let me have it back, as I'm afraid I can't spare it altogether. I'm not quite sure whether I'll print it yet. At first sight it seemed too sacred. Still I am coming round to the opinion that I ought to print it. Mr Blackwood will, no doubt, decide the matter one way or another. Meanwhile, I shall be glad to hear what you think.

"You will see what he wrote there isn't addressed to anybody in particular, though he is meditating chiefly upon his wife. I'm afraid there's no more in what I've hinted at than the bare possibility that, somewhere among his possessions, he may have left other similar manuscripts. If he has, it may easily be that other soliloquies concern yourself and others he used to know in England, and describe with similar charm the life you shared together."

XI.

IZA GREENWAY, BELOVED.

THE manuscript I handed the Major was a rough copy I had made of the contents of a note-book brought me under cover of a large envelope by a typical seaman of the British Mercantile Marine on the 6th of June 1917. It was plain that the sailor regarded the packet he bore as of the greatest importance, for, before delivering it to me, he was at no little trouble in making sure I was the man they say here I am. He explained his caution by stating how he had undertaken his commission at the request of an Arab sheikh he met in Muscat in March, the sheikh having so impressed him with the importance of the packet as to cause him to withdraw a quite natural suggestion he made at first, that he should post it on reaching England.

One glance at the envelope, fully addressed in a firm British hand—the same which addressed certain "botanical specimens" to me once—was sufficient to convince me that I was little likely to find the value of the package overrated. I opened it eagerly, the

sailor looking on, curious to see what had been so jealously committed to his care. His discomfiture was amusing when I drew a note-book from under cover. The note-book, worth perhaps threepence when the pages were blank, was tied up with a coarse tape and heavily sealed.

Cutting the tape, many pages were revealed filled with a handwriting I had never looked to see again —that of Walter Greenway. Looking up to express my feelings, and joyfully exhibiting the writing to the sailor, I was tickled to notice how discomfiture had given place to disgust on his face.

"A bloomin' diary," he muttered; "no good to nobody, and I've spent above two pounds to bring it!

"I thought the old idiot was sending you something ever so precious, sir," he went on, warming to his work; "'pon my word I did, the fuss he made about it! His English isn't up to a deal, that's true; but he knew what he was doing well enough. I can't have mistook him; his signs were plain. He'd ever such a lot to say about not trusting it to the post: nothing would do but he must find an Englishman to promise he'd seek you out, sir, and give it you himself. That's what he made me believe; and it's what he wanted me to believe, I'm certain about that. I should never have promised to bring it instead of posting it if he hadn't. Well, Sheikh Ibrahim doesn't half know how to look after his own end of a bargain, innocent old

duck as he looks! But he needn't have stuffed me with that tale. I could have posted it for a copper or two, and it would have reached you all right. I wouldn't have minded the bit of postage, but this lot's past a joke."

I hastened to reassure him. I had no need to make a close examination of the note-book to know I should find it well worth what it cost to reimburse its bearer for all his expense and trouble. His face cleared as he put away three British treasury notes; then, without undue pressure on my part, he began to tell all he knew of the Arab chief who sent him.

"I'm twenty-six," he stated; "and I went to sea at fourteen; I should think I'd been aboard about two years when first I clapped eyes on him; that would be when I was sixteen—about ten years since, and I must have seen the old bloke about once every year after that, so I know him well enough by sight. He used to have a son-in-law who could talk English almost as well as us. Both him and the old man were keen on the British; they'd come aboard and have many a yarn with us, the son-in-law interpreting. They say the young fellow's dead now. I think he must be, for it's a long while since I saw him; very likely he's broke his neck; he was as fond of climbing as a monkey, and he was bound to go too far some time.

"Somebody told me as the sheikh was selling his dhows, but I don't know whether it's true. He was on one when I saw him in Muscat, and he gave me that packet last March. A little woman, with one of them veils on, you know, sir, so you couldn't see her face, was with him, and two pretty little girls, and a little lad, just like the old man's son-in-law; they'd be the young fellow's wife and children, and they looked such a sad party it went to my heart to see them.

"In fact it's all through them children as I come to be mixed up with this lot. Our ship lay alongside the old man's dhow, and I was staring at the kiddies and feeling sorry for them—their father being dead—when the woman touched her father on the arm and made signs my way, then fetched the packet and gave it to him. It was just as I brought it, with the address stuck on the envelope, and waiting. He asked if we were homeward bound, and I told him, yes. Then he made me understand the packet was for somebody in England, and he wanted me to bring it. I told him I would if he liked, but it would come quicker by post. He rambled along with a soft tale about not wanting to rip what was inside. I told him that he needn't; but, as he shook his head, I says, just to pacify him, 'All right, I'll take it as far as England, then, and post it there.' But that wouldn't do for him neither. When he

tumbled to what I meant, he shook his head harder than ever. The little children and the mother began to cry, as if it made 'em miserable, me not doing what the old man wished. So, one thing with another, I promised I would; but of course I'd no idea what rubbish I was bringing."

Hope rose high within me as he talked. He knew the Greenway family, at least by sight. I would make him my messenger. If he were staying in England only a few days, the Arab mother had sufficient admirers here to load him with as many presents as he could carry for herself and her children, and I should find time to examine what he brought before sending a message of thanks. My task would be the simpler for his consent to bring the writing having caused the sheikh to feel it unnecessary to follow previous custom in tearing up the sheets.

The graver and, possibly, more important question of finding a means whereby the fact of Walter's children's inheritance might be revealed to their mother and her father appeared also to be brought nearer solution. I was anticipating the pleasure of conveying a welcome message to Walter's aunt and uncle, when the sailor dashed my hopes.

The Admiralty, he went on to tell me, having taken over his ship, crew and all, he did not look to sail Arabian waters again for some time to come.

He spoke with regret; it was evident he had grown fond of a customary round.

His regret was nothing to mine. I told him so, and explained why; whereupon he readily promised that should he, contrary to expectation, be fortunate enough to hear his destination lay that way any time while under the direction of the Admiralty, he would let me know at once. But he warned me not to place hope in that. Even if he were sent to India or Arabia it would probably be under sealed orders, making it impossible to let me know in advance. In that case we arranged how, if he met the Arab chief, he should explain why he bore nothing from me save verbal thanks. True, he was little likely to have such an experience. His service for the present would probably be on seas nearer home. Having made as much as I could of him I let the sailor go, satisfied that the trouble he had taken was fully appreciated.

It would not have helped in any way if I had made the discovery before he left. He obviously knew nothing of the envelope's contents till he saw it opened. When he was gone, settling down to read the writing, I found it not to be intended for me at all!

There are circumstances where general rules do not apply. It would never strike Walter Greenway, describing his "bit of spying" in Mesopotamia on sheets he was at such irritating pains to

tear to bits, that what he wrote in the most easy-going style imaginable would find its way into print and be talked about wheresoever the English tongue is spoken. Before he wrote his last letter he knew how the 'Maga' his father loved had told his earlier story. There is just a touch of pride in his reference to a "poor beggar" who "didn't do badly." He had not the least resentment, whether surprised or not, at the use I made of news he sent me. Some dim vision of the conclusion of his story in print was probably with him as he wrote it, "utterly prostrate." I can only imagine him as rather pleased than otherwise to provide "copy" I found very attractive.

If I could feel that he left instructions for the note-book to be sent me there would be no difficulty. But I cannot think he did. I think his widow, unable to read, and concluding the writing to be intended for me, urged her father to send it after letters already despatched when she found it among his effects. Probably an English clerk in some Arabian port wrote a duplicate when he obliged by writing my address on the label of a parcel of "botanical specimens," and that duplicate address was the one pasted on the envelope covering a note-book which nobody who could read it saw before it was sent off. It may be that Iza Greenway desired me to know by that token that all was well with herself and her children. Perhaps she intended to show afresh her abiding gratitude

for trifling gifts already made much of. But I am quite sure she was ignorant of the real nature and value of what she sent. No worthy woman would willingly part for an hour with a production so beautiful, so tender, so overflowing with love and worship for herself and the children she bore a hero husband who gave all for Britain—still less present it to a stranger thousands of miles across the sea. It is recorded how this same Iza Greenway once desired a mission doctor to send me tidings of her own bereavement, and how, producing a letter I once sent her husband, just deceased, she would only suffer the doctor the merest glimpse at it, jealously keeping it in her own hands. It is incredible that she knew what she was doing when she allowed this note-book, so infinitely precious to her, to leave her bosom.

For the writing is Walter's soliloquy upon his beloved. There he sits, in the bright moonlight, in the seventh heaven of delight, writing down the thoughts chasing one another through his wonderfully versatile mind as he rejoices over a priceless life given back to him out of the shadow of death. Now he puts down book and pencil to peep inside the tent where his beloved is lying; then he returns to resume his grateful task. It has been finished some months when he adds a few lines under similar mental conditions, but now he is moved by a sense of his own danger. He is on the eve of leaving home and loved ones in

quest of opportunity to serve his native country. It is all very beautiful, and should surely be given to the world.

It is doubtful whether any individual or family is justified in keeping priceless gems selfishly from a multitude they would refresh and cheer. I think it pure philanthropy to induce the owners of such treasures to allow the world a glimpse. If I have not waited for permission before disclosing this particular gem, there is ample reason why. Having given the worst I ever knew of Walter Greenway, I am not justified in withholding the best. The hesitation I felt when I mentioned the question of publication to Major Mills has all disappeared upon consideration of what is due to Walter's memory.[1]

I cannot at present trace the beloved wife who brought such striking language forth from her husband's soul. Even if I could find her, I could not make her understand. If I found a scribe to pen the request in her own tongue, her husband has stated that she cannot read, so no help is there. The treasure shall be returned to her at the earliest opportunity. I am doing what I can to find her father. Meanwhile I feel altogether justified in publishing, though without formal permission, this strange and wonderful soliloquy.

[1] Assisted, it is only fair to say, by Mr Blackwood's decision to publish the soliloquy in 'Maga' for August 1917.

"You will not die; you will not die; most sweet, most precious, altogether lovely little woman!

"Most blessed Arab nurse, may your life never know darkness; may sorrow never glance across your way; may you pass into the sunlight of your paradise from a gloaming as perfect as this world ever knew! Your skill and care and patience and wonderful tenderness, God being merciful to me, have given me back my beautiful, my all. While I live you shall never lack a friend. Count me your debtor evermore.

"Oh, my love, my love, lying there so weak, so worn, yet so altogether strong: your matchless eyes, for all your anguish, flashing infinite tenderness and abundant hope into my very soul: your lips, like threads of scarlet, murmuring music of good cheer which thrills my heart with ecstasy—none in all the world shall bear comparison with you!

"As one demented I paced to and fro in the hot sun all day what time I was not hearing of your mother how the anxious moments went over you. At length they bade me look upon the babe whose mother's life, they feared, would pay for his. I could not bear to see the lad. They were troubled at it, urging me to turn my eyes upon his

face, till, mad with sorrow, I drove them away. Our choicest pearls, sweet little Iza and darling Victoria—perfect image of that fondest of sisters, taken from me when I was but a youth, yet never far off—our little ones, seeing an evil spirit possessed me, shrank out of my sight, none finding time to cheer or comfort them where all listened for the flutter of dread wings.

"At dark I found our treasures, their angel faces furrowed with weeping, overpast, peacefully sleeping, safe in one another's arms. The horse they were so fond of petting watched over their bed of straw—faithful servant of Him Whose good angels guard little children's rest. What wonder we call God wise and kind and merciful! His hands folded those troubled weary forms in quiet slumber, laying them sweetly down, then charging His noblest creature next to man to keep them safe.

"I wept at the sight. Coming to myself, I stooped to kiss each perfect little face, my tears gushing like a flood when they stirred and smiled in sleep. Very tenderly I bore them to their own bed within the tent. Neither woke. Iza's big dreamy eyes opened, sleep holding her understanding fast. It was only a voice from dreamland I heard lisp 'Fader,' but it cut like

a sharp razor, so that once again I bathed both tiny faces with my penitent tears.

"How futile were the hours I had spent in pacing to and fro, vexed with misery! Surely it had been far better for me to busy myself chasing away the chilling awe and fear which weighed down those tiny, lonely souls! Even so, as my Scriptures say, 'No man liveth unto himself.' My selfishness wrought their misery even as my care of them would have wrought my consolation. The truth revealed to me, I knelt meekly beside their bed and breathed a prayer for pardon and peace.

"I raised my head. A face was bending over me; the face of the Arab nurse who tends my love so skilfully. The light was dim in the tent, but I saw that face to be aglow with happy and confident tidings.

"She did not speak; she only beckoned me with the hand, pointing to my darling's bed. I sprang thither. My beloved put out a wasted hand as she feebly raised her face ever so slightly. We kissed, beloved, and I sank beside your couch in an agony of joy, holding your hand. Delicious, indescribable, most blessed moments! I shall meditate upon them day and night as long as I live. Paradise gained, our bliss shall never cease, for paradise is love

made perfect through eternity. Your faith and mine, beloved, agree in this.

"My love withdraws her comely hand. She turns aside the coverlet to disclose an infant face, beautiful as the daylight, sweetly sleeping. I kiss the tiny forehead, and marvel at abundant hair, soft and shiny as silk, and dark and lovely beyond comparison. My love watches my face intently. By her knowledge of magic she sees I have no joy in possessing a son. Our eyes meet. Tears gleam like diamonds in the eyes of my beloved. Bitter disappointment and perplexity cloud her beautiful face. I place my arms about her; my lips rain kisses upon her cheeks. 'Oh, my love, my love,' I cry in my foolishness, 'how should I rejoice over the babe till the mother is safe!' Thus I burden my afflicted one, not considering. My beloved raises my face with both gentle little hands. Even as a mother gazes into the face of a grown son, but with an entrancing affection which burns itself into my very soul, so she gazes into my eyes, long, and oh, so fondly! then murmurs joyful news that all danger is past: God being merciful, she will stay in my company, and she is glad.

"Transported with delight I turn the coverlet down afresh. This time I look with other eyes upon the sleeping babe, and kiss with other lips. Being a man, and clumsy, I wake him, and he

cries lustily; wherefore I take him into my arms to comfort him. Perhaps I hold him awkwardly, yet you do not fear — you, who have seen me many a time soothe Iza and Victoria, know I can hold the tiniest infant without hurt or roughness. But the nurse has little confidence in my skill. Mistaking my powers, she takes him from me, plainly hinting that one who can but wake those who should be sleeping had best be gone. After one more gentle caress of my beloved, one more press of lips upon a little forehead, one more kiss for each of two angel faces slumbering in their corner of the tent, I obey, and am gone.

"How the old moon kissed my face as I stepped from the tent into a new world—a world made once more young and fresh and invigorating, so that I became a merry boy again! A resistless spirit of mischief overcame me. Stealthily I undid the cords of your father's tent, then climbed a date-palm. Feasting, hidden among the leaves, I was like to break my neck, such was the shaking the tree had as I sought to suppress my laughter. For I was watching your father, my beloved, coming from the ruins of his tumbled tent to wander round and round, searching, but half-awakened, for the cause of such a thing where all was still. As his mystery grew the more pronounced, my

tree rocked the more, till last of all I was forced to slide down quickly for fear of falling. Coming up to him unseen, I compassionated him with all solemnity, asking what calamity had happened, then helping to set to right the fallen tent. Yet soon my mirth burst out afresh incontinently, especially when we strove to lift anything together. For a while he stared at me perplexed as the fits overcame me. Then, understanding, he got his staff, secretly, next time joining in my mirth with playful strokes, and telling me I shall be a boy for ever—I, who at my time should be a grave and sober Bedouin, remembering he has wife and children to care for and give pattern to.

"Well, the tent is up again, beloved, and your father finishes his rest. I, from whom sleep is far away, sit in the moonlight, sadly tempted by the snoring I hear to play the trick afresh. I must be occupied if I am to let him be. Therefore I muse upon the glad days my love and I have spent together. You cannot read what I scrawl in the moonlight, and I am only talking to myself as it were. If you could read, beloved, I would write in your own beautiful tongue, and you should keep this love-chat as a message I sent you when I could not talk to you with my lips, though only removed from you by a strip of canvas and a tiny space. As you are

not a reader, I write in a tongue sweet to me beyond comparison because of the mother at whose knee I learned to lisp it — my mother whom you have not seen as yet, beloved, as you never saw my father, nor the sister I have told you of so often, and whom you love as I love— as all loved who ever heard of her or looked upon her gentle face. One day you shall meet, beloved: not here, not across the black water: but in a country where the righteous dwell, you shall be gathered together, the salt of this world, to be the jewels of that; and God who is gracious and merciful shall give a humble penitent like me place in your company, where all the suffering they who loved me had while I was yet a fool is for ever done away.

"Only three more days, beloved, and six years will have gone since it came into my mind to seek fortune on the sea, visiting strange countries in a ship which after nearly twelve months put into Aden one night when the moon was full. Having little to do, coming down from Mocha I had spent my time gazing towards the hills, and dreaming of a home on a strip of wooded country I saw, not understanding that God, Who is wise and gracious, directed and controlled the musings of my heart.

"How plain I see you, my beloved, as, in the bright moonlight, you glide unveiled from an

awning to gaze enraptured towards a star-spangled sky! How sweet and wonderful the blush which overspreads your face as you are conscious of a great ship, stolen beside your father's dhow unnoticed — a foreign ship, manned by infidels, one of whom, a swarthy fellow, all eyes, stares open-mouthed on deck, transfixed by your surpassing loveliness! You flee back under the awning, but your work is done. Yon clownish infidel is your obedient and devoted slave for ever and ever.

"Knew you as much, my love, when you hid yourself? While my heart throbbed with the fever you had given me, and my eager eyes waited, hour by hour, for another glance at your bewitching face, waited you, also, in kindred state? I know now; then I did not know. Your father coming forward with the dawn, so noble of face, so princely of form and bearing, it seemed mere folly to dream of you. When the sailors had their orders, and your ship glided away, I held you lost.

"Yet still I strained my eyes to penetrate under the awning ere you should be gone, and, by a miracle, I saw your face at last. I kissed my hand in ecstasy, not well knowing what I did, and I waved the kisses after you. Then a little hand, your own, beloved, waved an answer, and, was it possible? a kiss! Trem-

bling, I repeated my token, looking intent beyond expression for what I scarcely dare believe. Surely you did kiss your hand! Surely you threw the kiss towards me, ravishing my heart—this heart, which till that same day had known no love for any woman save my sister and my mother. 'She shall be yours: she shall be yours,' the waters sang, hour by hour, as I went about my work, and such gladness as was mine few men have known since time began. In my glee I tumbled, one by one, four of the crew into the sea, fetching them back, and only laughing when they called me mad. Night came: a squall arose: the winds cried in derision, 'She never shall: she never shall.' Soon I began to picture your ship lost, and yourself, my heart turning to stone within me.

"'Think you,' I inquired of the skipper in the morning—'think you any ship could live in last night's storm?' He looked at me, astonished: 'What storm?' he asked; and then I knew that fear for you had magnified the danger. Yet still the blessed promise and the accursed denial, 'She shall be yours'; 'She never shall,' alternately cheered and vexed my soul. Another day passed, and another night.

"Waking then, jubilant with hope, I laughed and sang till I was free to go ashore, where,

having bought a Bedouin cloak, I set my face toward the wooded hill-country of my dream. Hour after hour I journeyed, running till I was out of breath, then walking awhile, then running again, heedless of a hot burning sun. Nothing wearied me. Night fell with the land of my vision still far off. I was forced to wait till the moon rose, then, hastening on refreshed, I reached the spot on which your tent is now pitched, beloved, as the day broke. It was barren land my eyes beheld, but the pleasant stream and the fruitful palm-trees were there just as to-night. From the tree-tops, as I ate my breakfast, I saw herdsmen in the distance. Going to them, and taking care not to show how little I knew of Arabic, I learned from their talk how my feet trod the territory of Sheikh Ibrahim, which potentate seemed a stranger to one who was not aware he had seen his face already. His tent, to the north-east, they said, was plain to be seen if one climbed the hill, not being more than ten miles off; but the sheikh I might not see: he was away with his ships. Giving me milk in abundance, the herdsmen drove away their cattle eastward, and I, returning, sat me down in this very place, to plan a garden which should rise about my love and me, like unto paradise. So, in the seventh heaven, I dreamed till the sun went down.

"Then, out of the thick darkness, very suddenly, there arose a genie, even as out of the earth, and snorting fearfully as he came. He choked me as he seized me by the throat, laughing horribly and growling, 'Your love you shall see no more: you shall see your love no more,' then with a violent throw he cast me away, and I lay sprawling on the grass.

"I had slept, beloved; and a bull, strayed from the herds I saw in the morning, finding me asleep, had first sniffed about me, then tossed me. So I came to think; yet a bruise I had on the temple stunned me awhile, and I saw no bull when I woke, only the print of his hoofs. Stiff and aching from hurts, and from long lying on the dewy grass, I rose to my feet, the pleasure I had of yesterday's dreams all gone, and in its place sorrow of heart because of the wicked genie's heavy words. The rising sun renewed my spirits somewhat; still I turned my face back towards Aden, sorrowful and without hope.

"My race rules half the world, beloved, because no genie or man ever yet made it turn out of a marked path. I was miserable when I reached Aden; yet my misery knew not utter despair. I bought an Arab sailor's dress, put it in a bundle with my Bedouin cloak, and so returned to the ship, which, when it reached

Colombo, I left secretly with my wages, finding a quiet spot ashore, and putting on the Arab sailor's dress I had. Then I mingled with seafaring men, making out that I sought to help in the lading of vessels till I had a mind to go to sea again. It cheered my heart to move about my old ship where all knew me well, yet none owned me in my strange dress; but for one so given to mirthfulness the part was almost too hard to play, and I had to leave it unfinished before the end.

"Having need to improve my Arabic, I stayed ashore three months, the few words I spoke managing well enough for a churlish fellow whose evil temper did not suffer him to be friendly with the men he worked among, or with whom he sat as they rested from labour and talked.

"Why should I remind you of a day we shall neither of us forget while life lasts; a day, my love, when your father's dhow was short of a sailor, and I, having a mind to be back at sea, joined his company at Colombo? How I cursed the custom which forbade your appearing unveiled before men not your close relations, forgetting that the custom says nothing of covering hands! A little hand thrust out in the moonlight for a lover to kiss spoke wonderful things to me before long. Were we three

days, beloved, over deciding that the Prophet meant not to say a woman should still wear a veil when it was so dark that none could see her face? It was nearly as long as that, but, I believe, not quite. And, oh, the rapture of that first kiss, beloved! Its memory sends the blood coursing swiftly through my veins after five happy years are gone. Ah, we walked on air, those days, beloved, and shall again.

"You sleep calmly, beloved: I have taken a peep at you, and at the infant sleeping by your side. I have won a splendid sort of frown from nurse because I printed kisses on your foreheads. She is glad to be rid of me. I see her, there at the door of the tent, making sure I am safe outside again.

"Strange how successful was my disguise, my love, none on the ship guessing me to be other than the Arab sailor I appeared! I laugh as I remember the purposed lurch which sent the one-armed calender into the sea where we lay becalmed, to the end that he might bless his heroic rescuer, whom he would have cursed had he known all the truth. And you, my love, who thought me no better swimmer than he who declared he would have perished miserably without my aid, how dis-

tressed, how anxious was your face while I was in the water! To this hour I blush at the memory of the calender's praises, sung day by day till I threatened to cast him into the sea and let him drown, being weary to hear them. Yet those very praises inclined your father's heart towards me, beloved; wherefore a playful prank was the beginning of my highest fortune here, even as a playful prank began my undoing in my own country. Certainly I did wisely in seeking fortune where natures like mine are understood.

"That storm, beloved, which came near to bringing your father's death, the broken spar striking him but an hair's-breadth from a fatal spot, how craven the seamen's behaviour while the gale raged; how easily I won a name for high courage—I, who till that night had never been thought worthy of being trusted to navigate a cockle-boat! It was pure good luck, beloved, which brought us through, not any skill of mine, though I cannot persuade you this is true. Well, neither can you persuade me that any other woman in this world save my beloved has such affection as can make her forget the dread and terror which caused her to hide herself even from her lover, and come forth to brave the storm, hour by hour, in the black night, to pillow

her father's bleeding head upon her lap, singing melodies he loves the while.

"When the storm abated, and the crew regained a measure of self-control, so that I could render aid to your father, it was only the little they taught me when a boy at school I had besides the knowledge which comes to all. There was no cleverness, and no skill, beloved; only the simple doing of the best my sense told me to do. You both made too much of it, my love, forgetting that your father was healthy and strong.

"Yet he was weak and worn indeed when we knelt beside his couch, you having confessed to him our love for one another. It went to my heart to tell him, lying in that state, I was no Arab, but an Englishman. You thought me unwise, beloved; he would not mind, you said, and it would be better to wait. Yet I, who had been misunderstood in smaller things, felt it best to be plain in one of life and death to me.

"It was not easy to speak, beloved. I could hardly believe it possible for him to accept as a son an infidel stranger; yet utterly unworthy as I was to champion the fair creed in which I was born, I could not bring myself to conceal, still less to deny it, and boldness was the only course. How like a prince

he bore himself at my words! And can I ever forget his own?—

"'Son Walter, I ever loved a playful man who was also brave and strong. Moreover, at the moment I first saw you I read in your eyes that you are generous and good, which I call the religion that truly becomes a man. These few days of trial show me I read aright. I look into your eyes again. I see more. I see you love my Iza truly: even as she gives her whole heart, so you give yours. What should a father desire better for his only daughter than a husband who loves her perfectly and alone. If that husband's race be the noble British, how much more enviable the father's fortune! I have met the British many a time, in many parts, these many years, and I have come to know that a good Englishman vexes not his wife by setting a rival beside her. It is to escape a Turkish harem that Iza, who hates the sea, comes with me on these voyages. Now she has been given a husband who shall cherish her alone, she has deliverance from her fears both by land and sea for evermore. Son Walter, she is yours: may Allah bless you with abundant happiness. Leave me, for I would rest awhile.'

"Overcome by these gracious words, I kissed

him on the lips, as I kissed my father once when he lay ill after I became a man, and, like other sons in England, had long ceased to kiss my father when he was in health. He smiled, signing that I should kiss you also, beloved; whereat we blushed, shamefacedly, as though he bade us do some new and strange thing. Yet, if my memory serves, we found he had not set us too hard a task.

"We have talked a thousand times of all this, beloved, yet it is always sweet to go over it afresh; sweet to remember your father leading us to your mother's tent, and how like I found your mother to my mother, how she gave me place in her heart straightway, as though I had been her natural son. How sweet, too, were the music of birds and rippling water, the beauty of sunshine and flowers, and how luscious the fruits, as we walked, hand in hand, on the soft grass, day by day, for the happiest month wife and husband ever spent outside paradise itself!

"As for me, my joy was too strong for restraint. Now I disguised myself as a merchant, puzzling your father with bits of glass or bright pebbles which I solemnly pretended were jewels of great price. Now I passed myself off to your mother as a calender, winning goodly alms more than once. Then,

finding me out, both caught the spirit of our play, boxing my ears so merrily that they tingle as I write. Ah, they were charming days, beloved; we will live them over again when you are quite recovered!

"Sleeping still, beloved; praise be to God for sleep: already the colour steals back faintly to your cheeks. Remember you the day whereon I found you, as at this moment, but waking, little Victoria newly born, and lying as the boy lies now? I had hurried home after the voyage I took in your father's stead, he being ill of a fever when he should have sailed. It had taken long, for our fortune was ill, so that I feared you would be grieving for me as dead: wherefore I stayed not for the present I was minded to bring you from Muscat. As I saw you safe, my anxiety melted away. I remembered that I brought no present and was ashamed, murmuring my excuse. You blushed sweetly, then raised your arms to fall about my neck as our lips pressed again; after which you held me away, saying, 'What need have I of presents, beloved, who have you and this?' turning down the coverlet with bewitching pride, and showing me the infant you knew my soul would love the more for being a girl, as I desired.

Taking the treasure in my arms, I held her reverently against my bosom, calling her my Victoria many times because of her amazing likeness to the sister I had lost. I did not know it, but her name was Victoria already. You, my love, who knew my heart, had said it was to be. And so, as a perfect sister and a perfect queen, our little daughter bears a name endeared to me for all time to come.

"How I marvelled in the morning at the change your little hands had made about the place while I was away! Labourers, they said, had done much work too heavy for women, and your father and mother had helped you also. But yours was the greater part when all else had been accounted for. Your labours had not ceased, save for prayer. From sunset to dawn, you were engaged making the spot we love a paradise for my return. Yet while I admired and praised with all my heart, I grieved also. It is not our English custom for women who have strong husbands themselves to labour like slaves. You were puzzled, beloved, when I besought you to do no more heavy toil in the fields, calling our customs foolish till you saw my mind was firmly set; yet your remonstrances were gentle: you knew well my pleading was from love of you; so you

promised to take only the lighter tasks for yours, leaving the heavier for me, or for other men.

"Those other men might have begun to doubt whether I were a genuine Arab when they saw my strange ways, but that they believed your father's tale, told at the beginning, that I was his sister's husband's sister's cousin, returned after many years among strange peoples. They said my new notions would destroy the land. The women would rise up against their lords, and society would be undone. One after another, they shook the dust of our locality from their feet, taking their wives away, till none were left save the widow woman and her palsied son whom we helped by showing how to till their ground, and in other ways. At least we thought that to be why they went at the time. Later on we thought they had heard rumours of possible trouble with the Turks. Still we cared not for their going. When darling little Iza came, and we were utterly alone together, save for the widow woman, your father and mother on a voyage, was not our joy perfect, and did you not make a most wonderful recovery?

"I do not say the skilful nursing they provided this time for my love while I was away was not needed altogether. Still it was hard

to be told on my return that I might not venture inside the tent: that if my beloved saw my face she would surely die. I looked for quite another sort of welcome home after my four months' voyage.

"Because it was winter, and your father grew grey-headed, I had offered to take his ship to Basra when the merchants clamoured for a voyage he was loth to make, yet did not desire to refuse. I knew nothing of the real cause why he was so anxious to remain ashore, and you, my love, though you knew, as he tells me now, said nothing. The voyage was prosperous. I brought back the ship ten days before I had hoped to do. Then, at Mocha, I heard what the Turks had attempted, and my blood boiled within me.

"Seeing that they failed, I should not have taken the matter so hard had I not been already filled with anger from talk I heard at Basra when certain German merchants spoke ill of England to some Turks in their company, and discussed divers plans for raising the Mussulman peoples against Britain, who had declared war on Germany, as they said. Little they thought the Arab sailor understood every word, and it was well for him, perhaps, that his swarthy skin hid the flush of British pride which must otherwise have tinged his face. He held his tongue

with difficulty. He was one among many. His day, he felt, would come in time.

"Then, getting to Mocha, he heard how, pretending to be gathering the taxes, a thieving band of Turkish soldiers had stolen the best of what grew of the crops, and destroyed much they did not carry away with the hundreds of cattle they seized wrongfully. His father-in-law, he heard, chanced to be at home, which was fortunate, for, hearing that they came his way, he rallied his tribesmen so that the Turks were afraid of him, and, taking what was due only, were glad to leave a place they had boasted they would raid without mercy.

"When I knew that while I rejoiced over a safe and speedy voyage, my darling, whose prayers I held responsible for my prosperity, was terribly afraid because of Turkish lust and cruelty, I cursed my folly for mistaking why her father remained at home. When we met I reproached him. But his wit was not at fault in what he did. He wished me away. It was not his plan to come to blows with the Turks. His arm, he felt, was strong enough to hold them at a distance. Knowing my impetuous temper, he could not be sure that I should let the disappointed beasts go quietly, as his judgment saw was best.

"Yes, he judged right, beloved; for had I

seen the terror they say was in your beauteous eyes, I could not have let the men who created it go free. I know it, whose heart nursed the destruction of every one while I was shut out of your presence through the anguish you had as a legacy of that time of terror.

"It is dark: thick clouds have hidden the moon. I go to see how it fares with my beloved. Perhaps a stern mother, and a sterner nurse, who shook their heads when I would have seen you an hour ago, will suffer me to enter now.

"Awake, and the babe awake also! My love, how beautiful you are! How tender the light in your glorious eyes, fixed so proudly on your first man-child as the nurse puts him to your breast! And you are stronger for your sleep. I will not stay. You need further rest. Also, I am drowsy, now that every fear is past.

"Who are these who run into my tent, waking me with a tale too wonderful for words — a tale concerning a baby brother brought by angels to be their playmate? They have quite forgotten father's sullenness of yesterday, as, praise be to Allah! children do forget. They tell me in delightful prattle,

very disjointed, he is 'ever so sweet,' this wonderful angels' gift, 'yes, ever so sweet,' each taking a hand, as though despairing of convincing me how dear their treasure is by any descriptive power, determined to let my eyes behold the wonder in their mother's tent.

"An excited clamouring to be told his name, and no keen appreciation of the prosaic 'Walter' their mother murmurs with a smile; a grave interest in the order of the bath, over which nurse presides; a furtive, feather-weight touch, where nurse has dried a little form with a soft towel, as if to prove whether he is really flesh; a loving, delicate pressing of little feet against soft cheeks, then, reverent kisses! Ah, little women, little mothers, what has your father done to be worthy of such darlings as the good God has committed to his care!—nothing, nothing at all; nor can he ever do.

"You have no words. The mystery is too deep for you; the joy too perfect. You follow all entranced. Mother is given her son. He is put to the breast. Soon his eyes are twinkling, satisfied, while tiny fingers play on my beloved's bosom. My little girls are puzzled still more deeply. What *is* their brother about? Now Victoria's face clears. She has made a discovery. 'Iza,' she explains, 'baby pretends he is hiding; see, he wants

mother to help him!' It is not quite spontaneous, this inspiration Victoria has, for nurse assists in the conclusion by gently covering the tiny form. Iza, used to considering her sister a sage, nods her head gravely, and without a word. It is mother who looses tongues at last, telling the little mites they can talk now without fear of disturbing her in whose hearing no sound might be made yesterday. Because they obeyed so implicitly then, they have the greater gladness now. So I leave them for a while, going into the sunlight with a grateful heart.

"Sweet, delicious, solemn music, which stirs the soul to its depth—infant voices confidently breathing at a father's knee the prayer his mother taught him in days far away. His tears are very near; his throat chokes: what memories those clasped hands, and eyes closed in innocent, upturned faces, and words lisped childishly recall!—

> 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look upon a little child . . .!'

"'Even so, Lord Jesus!' is a father's earnest prayer as his heart joins in their perfect devotion, unmarred by any seeking after effect, made comely as the summer dawn by the pure

beauty of childlike faith. They pause for a moment. There has been the slightest stumbling over unfamiliar English accents, for that prayer is all they really know of their father's tongue. Now, in the Arabic they prattle daily, they say with beautiful smoothness—

> "'Allah, Who is wise and merciful, preserve our father always, and make him to dwell in safety on the big ship or on the land, so that he comes home to the mother and the little children, happy and glad, soon.'

"They are words their mother taught them spontaneously in a night of fear, and they continue to repeat them, morning, noon, and evening, regularly. It would hurt them to leave father out, and though their mother wearies to hear repeated words she thinks unmusical when I am there, yet, when I am away, the prayer her heart fashioned when she grew anxious over me will fit in again. Therefore I have insisted that her prayer and my mother's shall form the little ones' devotions, day by day, continually.

"Soon they lie sleeping in their beds, loveliest, most beautiful, most precious treasures the world holds for me — those who have prayed, dear, trustful little angels, and the tiny little brother whose lips can lisp no word,

yet whose cooing when awake is as a song of paradise. The mother sleeps too, wearied out.

"I look around me in the moonlight again. Months have passed since I wrote the former words to my beloved. In the meantime she has grown stronger and more comely, till to-night she sleeps, the very pearl of the whole world. Dear, delicious months we have spent together, making our home heaven, and our plantation fruitful beyond our dreams.

"You saw me troubled, beloved, at the news I had of your father, of pits digged far away for my countrymen to fall in. You saw I pined of desire to fight for George against the cruel Turk you hate. Sleep on, most noble woman, who, though it wrings your heart to part, gives me courage and strength to go forward! You will wake before the dawn. Then, hand in hand, we will seek your father, whose ship will bring you tidings of me wheresoever I may get in touch with him. We part at your father's tent, beloved; I to seek how I may aid and comfort England; you to charm away the fears our darlings will have for the father they will miss when they awake.

"And now, I pray for you, beloved, here, where we have so often knelt together, giving

thanks. This done, I commit myself to the God of my fathers, unworthy the country which bore me, and the wife and children He has given, yet meekly seeking some small service, if haply such a one as I may have place among the brave ones of the earth.

"The aspiration is very high, beloved. Not of myself, but of the parents who gave me birth, and of the love of a sweet wife and beautiful little ones, shall such excellent fortune come my way. I shall return, my love; but if I do not return, tell our darlings their father was no coward, but set before them the path of duty, you helping him, beloved. For yourself, remember always I am never far away. Here in the body, or where we meet who truly love when our spirits have found freedom, one day we shall whisper sweetly together, a perfect family, nestling close in realms of endless day."

And so, leaving this most moving soliloquy to show what manner of man he was, as we may suppose, quite unable to explain why he wrote or preserved it — it would not appear to have been so much as mentioned to the central object of his meditations—he set out to win higher "place among the brave ones of the earth" than his strange and humble soul could ever look to win.

"I shall return, my love!" Prophetic words which came so near to failure! Only, as we know now, because "soft, beautiful eyes, blazing with love, peered beseechingly into his own through all," was strength given him to crawl home, maimed and tortured for sake of the country which bore him.

A little more than a month in the company of wife and children, and, health and buoyancy renewed, he tells of setting out on a still more dangerous mission, fully conscious of the risk he runs. Once more he justifies the confident "I shall return"; but he returns to die.

He is content. The woman he loves and worships as few women have been loved and worshipped since time began, will, he is confident, "be both father and mother to our children, till all rejoin me in a world where, I believe, those who are kind and loving, loyal and true, in whose heart is set the mark of the spirit of a merciful and forgiving God, must surely meet in peace and bliss." Proud of being held worthy to die for "dear old England," he treads his hard and thorny path, erect, and like a man, heedless of bleeding feet and aching brow.

He was an extraordinary person. His character was so complicated, his nature so highly strung, he cannot be judged as other men. I make no doubt that she who so powerfully controlled his heart set out in her infinite grief the true measure of his worth—the light clean gone from her life—

sitting there at his grave mourning those eighteen despairing hours, wherein she moved to deep compassion the English doctor and nurses who had done what they could for the husband taken from her sight.

"If I do not return . . . one day we shall whisper sweetly together." If that were all the writing contained, so unaccountably allowed to leave her possession, except we assume she knew nothing of its value, I should never rest till I had found opportunity to give back, and have explained to her, those precious, hopeful words. Not that I suppose he who wrote them failed to whisper the like often in her ear. From what we know of him, it is almost certain that he did; and the lingering music of a voice beloved is better cheer than written words.

But for all this I seek diligently for "an Arab with a British heart" who will not lack admirers wheresoever men are found who speak the tongue and own affinity with the race of the son-in-law he so thoroughly understood. Walter's mother-in-law, also, is sure of like appreciation for her intelligent humouring of the playful, thoughtful "boy" who stole her daughter's heart.

Concerning Iza Greenway and the fatherless children of the hero whose soul enshrined them with sacred devotion, it would be impertinent to add a word to what is written of altogether lovable

figures beautifully sketched by moonlight as they slept.

"Even so, as my Scriptures say, 'No man liveth unto himself.'" No doubt he knew the words following, "And none dieth to himself." The children he adored will have heard from their mother of their father's sacrifice many a time before it is revealed to them how heavy a cross she bears herself continually, day by day, as her own bitter portion, willingly endured. For all this there must be compensation, and there shall. It is not a small thing to possess the inheritance those orphans share, and small things shall not come of it. Somewhere, somehow, the children of Walter Greenway and Iza, his beloved, shall carry on the good work their parents helped forward as best they could, to the end that this world may become a happier, fairer place for man's brief earthly dwelling.

XII.

A CONSULTATION.

It is curious how we English people usually choose first for remark, in any composition which affects us deeply, something we cannot at any time pretend is really striking when compared with other passages the writing contains. I suppose that is because in our reserved way we find it difficult to speak of things which touch the heart. Certainly there were tears in the eyes of that typical Englishman, Captain Smith, when he read more than one part of Walter's soliloquy, and the sweetly drawn scene of the little girls at prayer quite broke him down. Yet at first he mentioned none of the passages which stirred his heart. His earliest comments were natural enough; still, they sounded odd:—

"So we were right after all; the beggar did come aboard at Colombo disguised as an Arab, and was actually busy loading or unloading for ever so long without one of us suspecting him for a moment. No wonder he found the part 'almost

too hard to play,' as he says. I wonder his sides didn't split. Well, if he doesn't take the biscuit, I'd like to see the winner!

"Look at him among the Arab sailors again, while he's learning their lingo, passing himself off as a 'churlish fellow,' too bad-tempered to talk to 'em in a friendly way, sitting there listening while they did the talking, so as to pick their words up. And he'd pick 'em up like a magnet picks up needles. Bless you, it wouldn't be any more trouble to him than counting ten!

"I don't remember that tomfoolery he talks about at Aden, pushing four of the men into the sea because he'd a bit of devilment to work off. Still, I daresay he did. I think he gave everybody a ducking one time or another. It was such a common trick of his nobody would take much notice. I can't say I remember the question he asked me about the storm, either. But that's not remarkable. He was the rummest customer I ever saw in many ways. If it blew a hurricane and there was real danger, he'd be about as much bothered as a fish in the water; and yet when it was only a stiffish breeze, now and then I've known him look quite frightened and down in the mouth. I always reckoned he went by the moon a bit, so when he asked me about the storm he thought had perhaps wrecked the Arab dhow, I should have no cause to think anything about

it. I should pass it off as just one of many queer questions he asked now and then.

"I'm not sure that he hadn't some notion of leaving us at Aden. He doesn't say anything, but I remember he only got back from that trip inland he talks about just in time to come aboard before we left. I recollect talking it over with the mate when we missed him at Colombo, and both of us felt he'd been in two minds about giving us the slip earlier. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if the bull didn't toss the nonsense out of him for a while. As likely as not he'd some sort of a scheme for waiting at Aden for the dhow and trying to join there. If so, the bull did him a good turn, for there's no doubt that three months at Colombo would help him a lot in the plan he worked out so well. He could hardly have gone aboard ship as an Arab sailor and kept up the game without a bit of practice in their ways as well as their language.

"What he says about the old prince is just what I should expect. He's a gentleman—there's no doubt about that; as good a chap as you'll meet anywhere. I can see him now, reading Walter like a book, and seeing the man behind the boyish friskiness. If Walter had seemed to be ashamed of his own religion, Sheikh Ibrahim would have thought very little of him. I shouldn't like to say a deal in the old boy's presence against

the Prophet; he's not a bigot, you see, and he won't have anything to do with them that are. He likes a man. Well, he didn't find half a man in Walter!

"I wish I'd seen that little wife. It wasn't my luck to be on deck any time when she came unveiled from under any awning to look at stars or aught else. I always did say that fellow had a special providence looking after him to get out of the scrapes he did, and it seems he found one at last to put him in for a good thing when his time came. I wonder what she's like! Her father's a handsome old fellow. I'm sure she'll be a picture. But I wish I'd seen her—just to carry her in my eye. It isn't easy to figure out a pretty woman quite as you'd like, trying to draw her from her father's likeness, no matter how good-looking he is."

The skipper forgot that he had gone over this ground fairly exhaustively already. I reminded him of Nurse Edith's description as the best we had. That set him off talking on the deeper parts of Walter's soliloquy. Before he had got far others equally interested joined us. It was, in fact, a meeting of persons eager to learn all they could of the family Walter left behind. The skipper was attending, with the sailor who brought the note-book. If I were writing minutes of the meeting, I should say it was called at the urgent request of Major Mills.

The Major was there with his wife and father and Walter's uncle and aunt, so the two chief witnesses and myself brought up the total to eight. I worked myself into the chair in an informal sort of way. But I was not comfortable. I did it for the specific purpose of ruling out of order all reference to sins of omission against Walter, real or imaginary, and by whomsoever committed. Then, about as proud as most people are of the way they perform duties they have pushed themselves into, I retired in favour of a much better chairman in the person of the Major's father.

He is a stately, striking-looking gentleman—tall, erect, retaining every faculty of mind and body for all his eighty years, and possessed of sound judgment mellowed by time and experience. I had every confidence in the success of the meeting from the moment he began to preside. Still, I am glad I had the impudence to forestall him for a few minutes. I was heartily sick of recriminations over what had not been done for Walter in the old days, and, little as I am worth as a chairman, I put in a modest claim to doing something useful by getting unanimously quashed all further reference to possible mistakes in the past.

"My son and I have thought it advisable," the Major's father began in what reporters would call

his opening remarks, "that all who knew and cared for Walter in the old days should meet those who are fortunate enough to have seen him or heard of him more recently, or who are familiar with the Arab chief whose daughter he married, and whom he speaks of so beautifully in everything he writes.

"We are particularly fortunate in having with us the excellent captain under whom he served at sea for nearly a year, and who saw him as recently as April 1916 at Aden. I am certain that Captain Smith will be able to help us immensely. Then we have Mr Hart, the gallant sailor who was good enough to bring the last very touching writing we have seen and read with such emotion. Mr Hart's presence is exceptionally useful, as he is the very last person we know of to meet Walter's father-in-law—at Muscat, I believe, in March this year. The fact that Mr Hart has found it uncommonly difficult to get leave to be with us makes us all the more deeply indebted to him. He cannot stay long, and I do not think it will be necessary for us to keep him long. We are infinitely obliged to him for coming.

"The object my son and I had in view in calling you together—an object in which Walter's aunt and uncle completely concur—is to see whether in the first place it is desirable to attempt to find the

family during the war, and if so, is it possible? The second question is, should any one try and persuade the family, if found, to come over to England?

"As trustee under Walter's father's will, his uncle is naturally anxious to carry out as effectually as may be any promising plan for benefiting the children, who, in due time, are intended to inherit the small fortune left by their paternal grandfather. I do not think I need dwell upon the desirability of finding a means of intimating news of this fortune to the family. But, to my own mind, the sentimental appeal, as I may perhaps term it, is the stronger; I mean, no one can read the rhapsody our sailor friend, Mr Hart, was the happy means of bringing here, without feeling a keen desire to see and know the excellent woman who called it forth, and the children it so entrancingly describes. I take it quite for granted that everybody here, at any rate, is most anxious to show that bereaved family how thoroughly we all admire the hero they mourn. Now, what can be done to give effect to such a desire? Can anything at all be done at present?

"You have expressed your views already to my son, Mr Holmes, but, if you will be good enough, I am sure we shall all like to hear them now."

My views took little restating, being simply that a special search was impracticable during the war, and that it would be quite useless to attempt to

persuade the family to leave the East at any time. I thought no man except one who personally knew him would have the least chance of meeting the Sheikh Ibrahim we desired to get in touch with among scores of Arabs owning the same name and title. — Jones, Esquire, British Isles, would be about as easy a man to identify. Being obviously in hiding, the sheikh must be approached by some one he knew and trusted already. I stood by patient and persistent continuance in the use of the address near Mocha, depending upon a trusted agent forwarding on to the sheikh anything sent there. Then, when Captain Smith or Seaman Hart found it possible to sail Arabian seas once more, I thought they might carry to the sheikh such tidings or messages as we had to give, and explain our deep concern for the welfare of Walter's family.

"And you, Captain Smith, perhaps you will be good enough to let us hear your views," the chairman said after courteously thanking me for mine.

"If I were sailing my old route," the skipper stated confidently, "I'd undertake to find that Arab sheikh somewhere on the voyage, and I don't think I should disappoint you. I haven't been sailing those seas more than thirty years without learning a bit about the ways of Arab sailors. I've known above one or two get into messes of one sort or another which made them glad to put themselves out of the way for a bit. I've an idea where they

turn to when they want a hiding-place, and it isn't anywhere in Asia. Of course it would mean a hunt, and I might not succeed, but I haven't much doubt in my own mind I should.

"If I did find him, what then? My idea is to let him understand how proud British folks are of Walter's pluck, and how we're all aware that he's not a bad sort himself—that he helped Walter as far as ever he could in doing his bit for England. Then I'd try to get him to let me see the little woman and the children, and if I didn't make them understand what I was after, it wouldn't be for want of taking trouble to show 'em how much we all think of Walter, and how we all know well enough what a loss his going is to them.

"I should like to take a few toys and other presents of one sort or another with me, if I was lucky enough to see the mother and children; and, of course, I'd do what I could to let 'em know about the money that's waiting for them. But I don't attach much importance to that. I don't think they'd understand it, no matter how I tried to explain. They're not the sort of people we get used to here—always at the catch for money, as if money made men. The sheikh has his position ready made, and no amount of wealth can improve it. He's got all he needs. The rest of them will want for nothing while he lives, and he may live till the children are grown up; he's a strong healthy fellow, and though

we talk about him as an old man, I should question whether he's as old as me. The best thing that can happen to those children is for him to live till the lad's old enough to take his place. Then they'll be all right. If he doesn't live as long as that, though, he'll know somebody he can trust to look after their interests. He's no fool, and he isn't asleep.

"There's one thing quite sure: it isn't a ha'porth of good calculating on getting him either to come here himself, or to let Walter's wife and children come. There's no need for it; they won't desire it; and it would be absolute, downright folly to think of it, either now or when the war's finished.

"Of course everybody would like to see the family, but there's only one way of doing it that I know of —to go out there and see them. And that's not going to be easy just now. I can't get a ship myself of any sort. I thought I had managed it, but the shipping controller stepped in, and I look like waiting a year for all the hope I can see. When things righten themselves I'll be off like a lamplighter, and I'll take out whatever anybody likes to give me. The little woman and her pretty babies shall have a bit of pleasure if God gives me luck to find them.

"For the present I can do nothing, though. The old gentleman there (Walter's uncle) wanted me to go out as a passenger and see what I could do. It would be a waste of money. Passenger ships don't go where I want to seek. If I get a ship of my own

to take that way, early, I'll let you know in good time, but you might about as well expect the Kaiser to turn a human being as that to happen. We shall have to wait for the war to end: then I'll let you hear from me, certain, and we'll get to work."

"Thank you, Captain Smith," the chairman said gravely; "now could you help us a little further by describing this Arab chief? You see, it might help us in trying to tell others what he is like."

The Captain was puzzled. "It isn't easy," he replied at last. "I should know him among a thousand Arabs, just as you'd know your son, sir, among a thousand English officers. That's because I've seen him so often and know him so well. But when you try to sort a particular man out and describe him to another man who's never seen him, you've got a hard job. Supposing your name was mine, and you didn't know your son's regiment, or any more than he was an officer of some sort—you just knew he was in the British Army,—you'd look well asking people to take you to a man you tried to describe — an officer named Smith, dressed in khaki, middle-sized, neither fat nor thin, and not what you'd call either light-complexioned or dark, but just middling. If you said 'He's a good-looking fellow,' that would be all right; but then, folks who didn't know him wouldn't be helped a deal by that.

"I'm in much the same fix with Sheikh Ibrahim. There's dozens of dhow-owners call themselves that,

and nine people out of ten would call the lot of them handsome men—well-built, healthy-looking, and all that sort of thing. Of course there's something peculiar about our Sheikh Ibrahim; he's wonderful eyes, and a particularly intelligent, happy, noble sort of face; but I couldn't for the life of me tell anybody else how to pick him out, though I shouldn't mistake him in the dark myself. Can you do any better than that, Hart? There's a chance for you, lad."

The chairman smiled encouragingly at the younger sailor.

"I'm afraid not," he said, somewhat nervously, in response; he was not used to giving evidence before a commission of seven; "I've seen him many and many a time, and I've always thought him a sharp old chap, able to take care of himself as well as most folks. He's a face that you remember well, because of his eyes, I think, and he's not a bit cruel-looking, like some of the Arabs are."

That did not carry us far.

"But is there any Englishman we are likely to know whom he resembles at all; or can you tell us of anybody, or any picture, anywhere, he reminds you of?" the chairman persisted.

"Well, sir, now you put it like that," the sailor answered—"he's not unlike a picture as we used to have in a family Bible at home, of Peter trying to walk on the sea, but I can't think of any English-

man a bit like him; his whiskers aren't unlike Tirpitz's whiskers; their faces aren't much alike, though."

"As Captain Smith says, you'd know him at once if you met him again, but you can't give a description such as would enable a stranger to recognise him?" the chairman suggested.

"That's it, sir," the sailor acquiesced, relieved at the close of an ordeal, and going on more at his ease; "you see, sir, there must be hundreds of British sailors who know him well by sight, and it would be easy enough to make any of them understand who we were talking about, just as Captain Smith made me understand in a minute, though I've never seen the sheikh anywhere when the Captain was about."

"I should say to anybody like that, 'Do you remember the old Arab bloke who liked a yarn with Englishmen anywhere — the chap with that son-in-law what could talk English so well, who used to trade between Aden and Ceylon sometimes, and sometimes round the Arabian coast?' That 'd fetch 'em, sir; but I don't know any other way as would."

"You think he would be well known through Walter, for of course you understand his son-in-law was the Englishman we're interested in," the chairman continued.

"I know since Captain Smith told me: I didn't

quite tumble to it when I saw Mr Holmes here three weeks ago. Yes, sir, that's how the old gentleman would be known; but you mustn't talk about the son-in-law as if he was English—everybody was fairly taken in. You'd have to ask them about an Arab."

"I see," the chairman assented; "now listen, please. When you saw the veiled little woman on the dhow in March, you could see her eyes, of course?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were they like?"

"Wonderful, sir; enough to fetch a duck off a pond—that beseeching like."

"Thank you; and the children, can you describe them?"

"One of the little girls might be seven or eight years old; she was tall for her age, I should think, for she'd a childish face, and she was very fair for an Arab; if she'd had wings you'd have took her for an angel. It's my opinion she's not staying long in this world. She's such an awful cough. But the younger girl, about six, perhaps, tiny and very much darker, was my favourite for looks. She reminded me of her father, only she'd her mother's eyes. It makes my tears come every time I think of her face; you see, sir, she happened to look right into my eyes, and it was such a look! It was as much as to say, 'Where's my father gone?

Have you got him on your big ship, or where is he? Because I want him so!' Oh, she's a bonny little lass, is that; I shall never get her face out of my mind, and I don't know as I want, bless her little heart! Then the lad; well, he's only about two or three, not very big, and his father over again—the very picture of him."

"You say the eldest girl had a bad cough?" Walter's aunt asked anxiously.

"Yes, ma'am," the sailor replied; "like somebody in a galloping consumption, for all the world."

"Or like whooping-cough?" the chairman suggested; and the sailor agreed, to everybody's relief. It was evident, from a subsequent dialogue he had with the aunt, that a bad cough of any sort spelt consumption to him. The aunt's anxiety arose, of course, from Walter's mention of "little Victoria's cough, her aunt's cough," and that aunt, the elder Victoria, died of consumption. What the sailor said proved no more than that both in August, when her father died, and also in the succeeding March when the sailor saw her, the little girl had a cough. There was no need to run off with a notion that it was likely to prove fatal. Probably Seaman Hart was struck with the child's fair skin, and his fancy that she resembled an angel caused the cough to suggest to his mind an early grave.

"Now, Charles," the chairman said to his son, after congratulating the sailor on the help he had

given us, "perhaps you would like to ask a question."

"I don't know that I've anything to ask, sir," the Major replied. "It seems a pretty hopeless mess. Apparently there's nothing to do but to follow the miserable 'wait and see' policy, and I'm so heartily sick of it! I was hoping that Captain Smith would have changed his mind about going out to search."

"I'd pack up to-day if I thought I could do any good," the Captain rejoined at that; "but what good could I do without I had my own ship, to go where I liked and how I liked and when I liked? Then it would cost more than the money those children are to handle to take a ship out on purpose, and all for nothing, ten to one. Haven't you noticed a thousand times when you're looking particularly for anything, you can't find it, while it turns up under your very nose when you're not thinking about it. My plan is to sail into ports that I have in mind here and there, on ordinary business, and keep a sharp look-out while I'm going about my work. If I don't find him one time I shall another, if I sail in likely waters long enough."

"You're perfectly right, Captain; I'm not criticising your judgment," the Major answered; "I'm quite convinced there's no other plan, but I'm disappointed all the same."

"Don't you think you may soon get a ship, Captain Smith?" the Major's wife pleaded; "you

see how anxious we are for you to find this pretty little mother, and those dear babies of hers."

"Madam," the Captain answered, "I wish with all my heart I could get a ship. I'm as anxious as anybody to see those children, and to let them know they've friends here, and I'm perfectly sure I shall see them some day; but it's no use saying I think I've the least chance of getting a ship to take to those parts yet awhile. They're more likely to put me on a different route altogether if they do find me a ship at my age. You see I'm an old man, and have always sailed a schooner; and schooners being scarce—more scarce even than the rest of shipping—they'll not spare one for the sort of trade I've been used to, even if they trust an old man on a new route, which I can't say they seem keen to do at present. When the war's over they'll want me bad enough—you can make sure of that; then I'll promise you I'll find Walter's people if they are to be found."

"You've read the last writing that came, Captain Smith," Walter's aunt added, supporting Mrs Mills' plea; "you see what makes us specially anxious now."

"I do, madam," he said; "and I wish I could help you more. Of course you're anxious. But it can't be helped. Keep on sending a present now and then, as Mr Holmes says. You may hear from them in that way. Anyhow, it's worth trying. I'm sure

it's no use thinking of anybody bringing them over here. They'll never come. All you can do is to send messages by anybody likely to meet them, so they'll understand why the presents keep going. Of course, if you could take a trip yourselves—that's what would satisfy you best; but it's out of the question at your time of life—you and his uncle, I mean,—the parts you'd have to search."

"You're right, Captain," the Major agreed; "well now, can we make a bargain? Will you take me out the moment we can get a ship after the war's done? Never mind expense. Will you do it?"

"Aye, Major, with the best heart in the world!"

"Shake hands, Captain; you're a brick. Now it's a bargain! Good, I'm satisfied! It's the best we can do. It's up to the rest of the party to look after the parcels while the Admiralty and the War Office set us our own work where they want us on sea or land till the Kaiser's done. Seaman Hart, you're on this job too, remember! The moment you hear the war's done, wherever you are, you come to me, or else write. And if in the meantime you, either of you, meet anybody going to the part of the world we're off to as soon as we're free, don't forget to tell them to keep their eyes open for what we want to know."

Captain Smith, Major Mills, and Seaman Hart having concluded a good deal of hand-shaking over a mutually satisfactory bargain, the business of the

meeting seemed brought to an abrupt ending, when Walter's uncle, who had been a model listener up to now, ventured an inquiry on his own account.

"Do you ever have to consult a solicitor when you're in a foreign port, Captain Smith?" he asked. "I was thinking, perhaps, you need legal advice now and then when difficulties arise, and I was wondering whether you chance to know any one in Aden, say, who would act for me in trying to find Walter's family. I feel I ought to be doing something on my own account. I ought not to depend upon others; besides, I'm too old to afford to wait very patiently. I should like to feel I'd found the children before I die, and my own solicitors seem unable to make the least progress."

The Captain had no information to give, but he entirely agreed with the chairman's opinion—

"I'm afraid, Mr ——, it will be hard to find any solicitors able to help us. We are apt to forget that Walter practically became an Arab for eight years, and that until the very end of his life none of his own countrymen ever dreamed he was an Englishman during the whole period I have named. If we did employ a solicitor he could only do what we are doing far better already. He could only employ agents to search for the Arab sheikh. We are doing that with much more excellent agents than a solicitor would be likely to find, thanks to the kindness of our sailor friends, who are as interested

as we are ourselves. It is plainly a case where some one who knows the sheikh must undertake to trace him out. No other way is open at present, or ever will be open, except the sheikh should himself voluntarily disclose his whereabouts. I agree with the idea of keeping up a supply of presents through the address which used to find Walter. We may quite easily learn what we seek that way. If we don't, there is nothing for it save to search. And our sailor friends are more competent to do that than any one else I can think of. Consequently, I should advise you to wait as patiently as you can, Mr ——. Possibly the wait may not be long. The war may end quickly, or Mr Holmes may have further news."

The Major was seeing the sailors to the railway station, possibly out of desire to discuss plans for the voyage they had agreed to make together after the war. He was meeting all other members of the party but myself a little later at lunch. Learning that my engagements forced me to deny myself the pleasure of sharing their meal, he thanked me warmly for lending him a manuscript copy of Walter's soliloquy on an occasion already mentioned, returning it with obvious reluctance, and showing infinite pleasure when, going back on what I said in lending it, I asked him to accept it as a poor sort of parting gift upon his departure for France.

The sailors carried away with them everybody's gratitude for sparing us their time and giving us their advice. They hurried off because trains won't wait. Hart was forced to catch one due in a few minutes, and the Captain, returning to the same place, thought he might as well have his company, and, at the same time, win the few hours' longer chance of getting a ship his earlier presence in port would give.

The Major's reference to Walter's soliloquy was the beginning of a conversation which followed his departure.

"Isn't it perfectly beautiful!" his wife exclaimed; "it's positively fascinated me. Wherever did the man learn to write so charmingly?"

"He was always an extraordinary lad," Walter's uncle remarked of him with intense pride; "he seems to have turned to literature late in life. But always, whatever he set himself to do, he made a master-hand at it. He never really studied music, yet I remember he played the organ in his school chapel for a service at thirteen. He'd taken the fancy of a genius of a music-master they had there at the time, and so got coached a bit. I understand he played the service through without the smallest mistake."

"Yes," the aunt agreed; "and he could paint quite attractive water-colour pictures though he never had a lesson in painting. I've several he did for

Victoria's birthday several years in succession—all before he was nineteen. Many people who thoroughly understand painting admire them very much. They are the work of a real artist, they say."

"Yes, I know," Mrs Mills corroborated; "we've several he did for Charles, and we've nothing nicer in the house. But this rhapsody is so very strange and so very lovely; don't you think so, father?"

"I've always been a reader, my dear," her husband's father answered; "I think I've read something of every class of literature; but I don't remember reading anything quite like it in my life. It is very strange, as you say, and most beautiful. I am wondering where its peculiar charm lies.

"I think it is in the ease, energy, and clearness with which he writes — his mind is singularly healthy and pure; then he is original to a degree; his writing savours of the style of the English Bible and Prayer-Book, but that is, I think, only because he is among people and scenes and modes of life the Bible also pictures, and in spite of the style, his matter is quite original; again, though you see his hand in all he writes, he sinks himself in an extraordinary manner which makes all his compositions fascinating, throwing his readers' whole interest upon the scenes or people he pictures

with quite delightful strength and simplicity; last of all, he writes because he must; he is sincere; he thinks nothing of effect, only of recording words and thoughts which insist upon being put down.

> "'You will not die; you will not die; most sweet, most precious, altogether lovely little woman!'

"The words burn him; he must express them. There is no one to speak them to, so he writes them down, all living and moving with his intense energy.

> "'Oh, my love, my love, lying there so weak, so worn, yet so altogether strong: your matchless eyes, for all your anguish, flashing infinite tenderness and abundant hope into my very soul: your lips, like threads of scarlet, murmuring music of good cheer which thrills my heart with ecstasy—none in all the world shall bear comparison with you!'

"You can see his pencil trembling with the emotion he feels as he rejoices over the woman he worships, snatched from the jaws of death. Again, you may trace tears on the pages as he writes—

> "'At dark I found our treasures, their angel faces furrowed with weeping, overpast, peacefully sleeping, safe in one another's arms. The horse they were so fond of petting watched

over their bed of straw—faithful servant of Him Whose good angels guard little children's rest. What wonder we call God wise and kind and merciful! His hands folded those troubled weary forms in quiet slumber, laying them sweetly down, then charging His noblest creature next to man to keep them safe.'

"Then, look at this—

"'My love withdraws her comely hand. She turns aside the coverlet to disclose an infant face, beautiful as the daylight, sweetly sleeping. I kiss the tiny forehead, and marvel at abundant hair, soft and shiny as silk, and dark and lovely beyond comparison. My love watches my face intently. By her knowledge of magic she sees I have no joy in possessing a son. Our eyes meet. Tears gleam like diamonds in the eyes of my beloved. Bitter disappointment and perplexity cloud her beautiful face. I place my arms about her; my lips rain kisses upon her cheeks. "Oh, my love, my love," I cry in my foolishness, "how should I rejoice over the babe till the mother is safe!" Thus I burden my afflicted one with further care, not considering. My beloved raises my face with both gentle little hands. Even as a tender mother gazes into the face of a grown son, but with an entrancing affection which burns itself into my very soul, so

she gazes into my eyes, long, and oh, so fondly! then murmurs joyful news that all danger is past. God being merciful, she will stay in my company, and she is glad.

"'Transported with delight I turn the coverlet down afresh. This time I look with other eyes upon the sleeping babe, and kiss with other lips.'

"How far a person is removed from ordinary men when his mind is swayed with agonies most of us would experience as sad commonplaces to be dully acquiesced in because things we cannot help, whereas he feels they will drive him mad! He must find employment for that strange, strong mind of his after emerging from a fever which leaves him as if bathed in fresh oil, everything about him clothed with a new glory. So he steals to his father-in-law's tent, unfastens the cords, then climbs a palm-tree to rock with laughter as he watches the result of his play.

"His description of all this is just a boy's description, in complete harmony with the new life he has entered in a moment. We see him fidgeting about next for other work to do. He thinks of undoing tent-cords again as he hears fresh snoring. Then he remembers a note-book, and to keep himself occupied he begins his rhapsody.

"The words push one another along. He has neither time nor need for fine phrases. His sim-

plicity and sincerity are enough to make what he writes attractive to his fellow-men everywhere, though they are not so much as in his thoughts. He is telling of his own experience of eternal facts in human nature, and telling in the manner of one across whose spirit has shot the tenderest gleams of insight — a writer rich and novel, and intensely interesting because absolutely true to life.

> "'Yet still I strained my eyes to penetrate under the awning ere you should be gone, and, by a miracle, I saw your face at last. I kissed my hand in ecstasy, not well knowing what I did, and I waved the kisses after you. Then a little hand—your own, beloved—waved an answer, and — was it possible? — a kiss! Trembling, I repeated my token, looking, intent beyond expression, for what I scarcely dare believe. Surely you did kiss your hand! Surely you threw the kiss towards me, ravishing my heart — this heart which till that same day had known no love for any woman save my sister and my mother. "She shall be yours: she shall be yours," the waters sang, hour by hour, as I went about my work, and such gladness as was mine few men have known since time began. In my glee I tumbled, one by one, four of the crew into the sea, fetching them back, and only

> laughing when they called me mad. Night came; a squall arose; the winds cried in derision, "She never shall: she never shall." Soon I began to picture your ship lost, and yourself, my heart turning to stone within me.'

"Poor Walter, not very far from madness, after all, I fear, though your pictures are all so beautifully and so smoothly drawn!

"I think no greater revelation has come to me of any man's character than this rhapsody has brought of Walter's. Remembering his wonderful cleverness in many branches of art he never really studied, as we have heard, and his astounding genius in languages which, though he did study in a way, he found not the least trouble; and then, looking at this calm description of a strange medley of heart-stirring scenes and playful pranks, I see clearly we went wrong in ever attempting to judge his conduct by ordinary standards. It should have been enough for us to know, as we did know, that he was good: wherefore all the faults men thought they saw in him, and which he himself almost led us to believe were really there, were illusory.

"Who can have the heart to think hardly of the writer of this?—

> "'Who are these who run into my tent, waking me with a tale too wonderful for

words — a tale concerning a baby brother brought by angels to be their playmate? They have quite forgotten father's sullenness of yesterday, as, praise be to Allah! children do forget. They tell me in delightful prattle, very disjointed, he is "ever so sweet," this wonderful angels' gift, "yes, ever so sweet," each taking a hand as though despairing of convincing me how dear their treasure is by any descriptive power, determined to let my eyes behold the wonder in their mother's tent.

"'An excited clamouring to be told his name, and no deep appreciation of the prosaic "Walter" their mother murmurs with a smile; a grave interest in the order of the bath, over which nurse presides; a furtive, feather-weight touch, where nurse has dried a little form with a soft towel, as if to prove whether he is really flesh; a loving, delicate pressing of little feet against soft cheeks, then, reverent kisses! Ah, little women, little mothers, what has your father done to be worthy of such darlings as the good God has committed to his care! — nothing, nothing at all; nor can he ever do.'

"Or this:—

"'Sweet, delicious, solemn music, which stirs the soul to its depth—infant voices confidently breathing at a father's knee the prayer his

mother taught him in days far away. His tears are very near; his throat chokes: what memories those clasped hands, and eyes closed in innocent, upturned faces, and words lisped childishly recall!'

"But the whole rhapsody is studded with gems,—I could quote from beginning to end. Almost any section chosen at random would do to illustrate what I mean when I say the peculiar charm of the composition seems to me to lie in the ease, energy, and clearness with which the writer sets down his thoughts, his originality, his marvellous power of sinking himself so as to throw the readers' admiration all upon the objects he describes with simple strength, and the central fact that he writes because he must—because what he has to say cries to be said, and will take no denial.

"Then, of course, there is his desperate devotion to the land of his birth, rising superior even to his devotion to the wife and children he loves so passionately:—

"'You saw me troubled, beloved, at the news I had of your father of pits digged far away for my countrymen to fall in. You saw I pined of desire to fight for George against the cruel Turk you hate. . . . And now I pray for you, beloved, here, where we have so often knelt together giving thanks. This done, I commit myself to the God of my

fathers, unworthy the country which bore me, and the wife and children He has given, yet meekly seeking some small service, if haply such a one as I may have place among the brave ones of the earth. The aspiration is very high, beloved. Not of myself, but of the parents who gave me birth, and of the love of a sweet wife and beautiful little ones, shall such excellent fortune come my way.'

"I think that passage, as charming as any, gives the key to his whole being. He is an inexplicable enigma unless one realises that, with all his extraordinary ability, and with all his exasperating love of mischief, he remained at heart as humble and as easily moved as a little child. I understand now, Mr Holmes, why we ought to have met him at the prison gate. I am sorry now we failed to do so."

Mr Mills concluded too soon an absorbingly interesting review of Walter's character as revealed by his soliloquy. It was remarkable how readily he spoke, rarely referring to the paper on which he had written the extracts he quoted at length quite accurately—a wonderful feat of memory for a man of his years, especially as he could not have done more than read the passages he gave above two or three times.

Swiftly as it passed, a full hour was occupied, and the Major returned before his father had done,

discovering how the party had not reached the hotel where lunch was ordered, and coming to hasten them along.

"You hinted that Walter may have written something else, bringing some of us in," he blurted at me as his father finished. "What makes you think it possible he did?"

I wonder how many scrapes my over-ready tongue has got me in? Probably my first conclusion was right. Walter's soliloquy was the solitary remnant of his writing, found among his effects, and forwarded to me just because his people had been asked to send his other writings here. I had no foundation in fact for the impression I conceived later, and passed on. It came from the accident that the soliloquy was written in a type of note-book often sold by the dozen. I am almost certain it was bought in England, and I think Walter bought it himself, at a shop not many yards from the door of my office, for it bears on the cover initials corresponding with the initials of a firm of stationers doing business there. If he did, then I think a parcel I remember him returning with, after doing a little shopping before we caught the train which took him to his ship, contained a dozen note-books at the least. The letters he wrote to me were on sheets more than twice as large as the note-book pages, not nearly as convenient to a person writing in a camp or tent. I formed the

opinion that he might have used sheets of awkward size because his stock of note-books was exhausted. Consequently I arrived at the conclusion that other filled note-books may exist somewhere.

On such a slender theory was my hint founded. Since Walter filled one book with one set of reflections, it was quite possible he filled others with quite different sets. It would be like him to scribble down his thoughts when they wandered back to days at home or school. And in those thoughts his old chum would probably occupy no unimportant place—neither would his old employer, nor his aunt and uncle, play minor parts.

It is all very well imagining such a thing: to try and make the imagination so live as to convince others of its probability is a vastly different proposition. If I did not altogether succeed, still I might have done worse.

"I do hope you're right," the aunt said; "I should love to know he thought of us all as he thought of his father and sister and mother. And I hope he's written more, too, about his wife. I often try to picture what she's like. The more I hear, the more I want to hear, and the more it makes me long to see her. You'll let us know the instant you hear anything further, won't you, and you'll tell us as soon as ever this is printed, so that we may get copies at once."

"Yes, don't forget, old man," the Major added.

"I'm awfully glad to have this manuscript copy you've given me; but it's hardly print, is it?"

There was no occasion to advertise the fact that I don't write as easily legible a hand as I might. In my confusion I fortunately remembered Nurse Edith's visit. Describing the portrait she drew of Walter's wife seemed a good plan for drawing attention from that weakness of mine the Major had uncharitably laid bare. The company were tremendously interested.

"I begin to think," the Major remarked meditatively, "those sailors, smart as they are, haven't got quite all the wit in the world. I've an idea I'll work on a theory of my own when I start that search with them. They can hunt for an Arab sheikh while I look for a little woman with a pair of wonderful eyes. I'm not a bit certain I shan't be successful first."

"I wish this wretched war were over so that you could begin your search to-morrow," his wife said fervently.

"Hadn't we better give in and make peace then, dear?" he suggested playfully.

Her eyes flashed a little after the manner one can imagine other eyes flashing. "Indeed no," she exclaimed; "no peace till the German and Turkish beasts are tamed for good, after all the sacrifice you men have endured, and all the anxiety and sorrow we women have faced and shared. I'd be

ashamed to meet this splendid little Arab who has given just everything, if I had to confess that after all her husband died in vain."

So, also, would every other admirer of Walter Greenway and Iza, his beloved, everywhere.

Will the day of victory and peace find us nearer success in our search, so that we may show her we know he helped to bring about the things we rejoice over, and speak to her as we would love to speak of the hero she has lost awhile? Is it a dream I have—the feeling that somewhere there are other note-books, or shall I hear of her father sending fresh tokens? Shall I ever know she fully understands the words of Walter's soliloquy, received back safe and treasured, as they assuredly will be treasured in that case? Time and perhaps a further volume may tell.

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